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NOVEMBER, 1977

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November 14, 1977

MEMORANDUM

*Public welfare admin -- CA --
Fresno Co.*

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Study of the Department of Public Welfare

I am pleased to present this report on the Welfare Department. It represents approximately six months effort of the Management Services staff, and is one of the most intensive study efforts ever performed by this office.

It has been prepared as a result of the May 3, 1977 presentation to your Board by the 1976-77 Grand Jury on the Welfare Department. It examines each allegation made that day, as well as those made in the interim and final reports of the Health and Welfare Committee.

We would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the large number of Welfare Department employees who participated in this study. Their contributions were essential.

The following staff of our office conducted this study:

Terence L. Henry, Principal Administrative Analyst
and Project Director

William Sims, Senior Administrative Analyst

Dwayne Smith, Administrative Analyst III

M.G. Wingett

M. G. Wingett
County Administrative Officer

MGW:cf

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November 24, 1977

MEMORANDUM

Board of Regents

TO:

SUBJECT: Study of the Department of Public Health

I am pleased to present this report to the Board of Regents. It represents a study of the Department of Public Health, which is one of the most important and complex of our state's agencies.

It has been prepared as a result of the study of the Department of Public Health by the 1975-76 Board of Regents. The study was designed to examine each of the major areas of the Department of Public Health in the light of the needs of the State and the people of California.

We would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the Department of Public Health in the study. The study was conducted by a group of people who were selected for their contributions and expertise.

The following staff of our office conducted the study:

James A. Smith, Director, Department of Public Health
and Project Director

William E. Smith, Director, Department of Public Health

James A. Smith, Director, Department of Public Health

W. A. Smith
Director, Department of Public Health

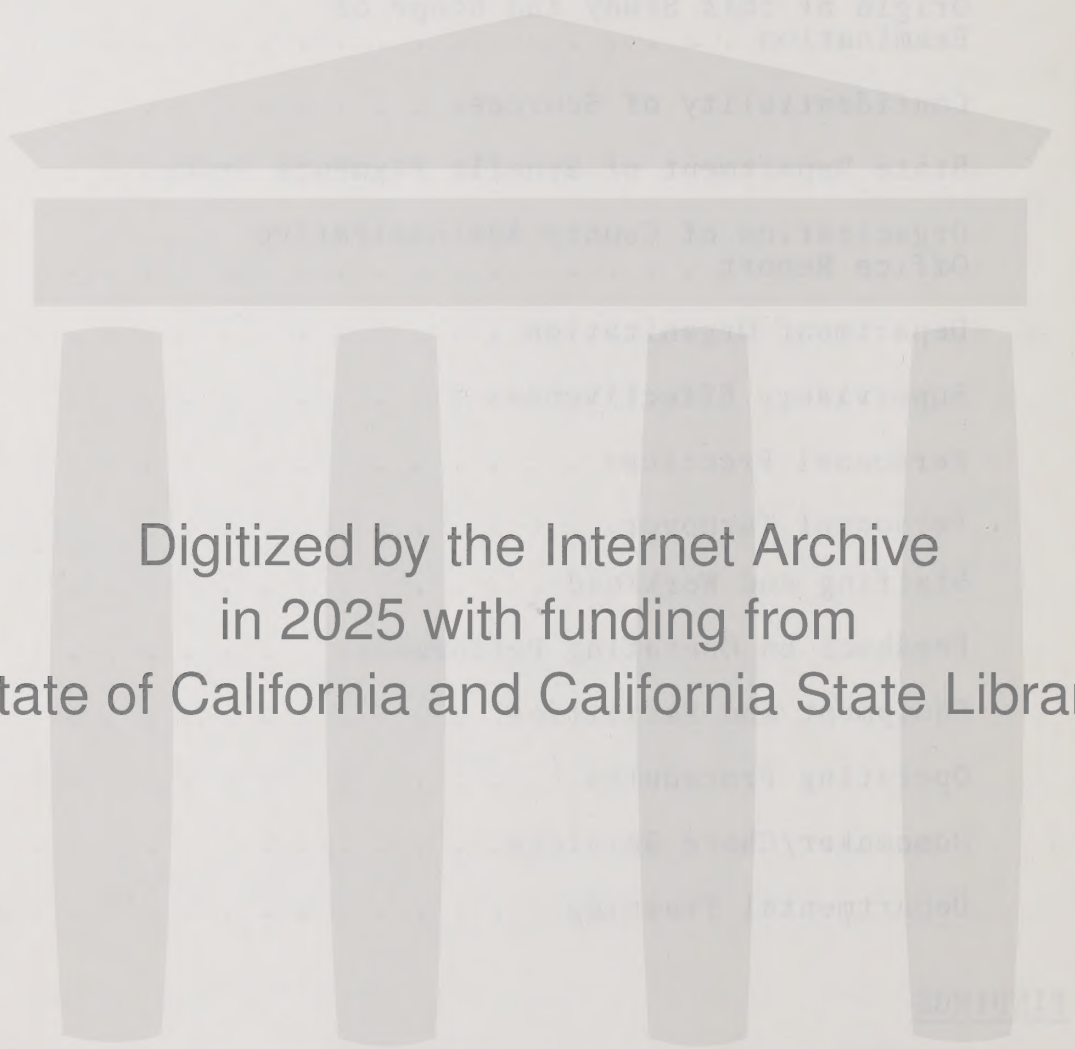
TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</u>	
Origin of this Study and Scope of Examination	i
Confidentiality of Sources.	i
State Department of Benefit Payments Study. . . .	ii
Organization of County Administrative Office Report	ii
Department Organization	iv
Supervisory Effectiveness	v
Personnel Practices	ix
Personnel Turnover.	x
Staffing and Workload	xi
Feedback on Operating Performance	xiii
Equipment and Facilities.	xv
Operating Procedures.	xvi
Homemaker/Chore Services.	xvii
Departmental Training	xviii

FINDINGS

SECTION I - DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

1. Organization	1
Exhibits I-A - I-G	
Existing Organization	6
Exhibits II-A - II-E	
Proposed Organization	13
Exhibit III	
Position Additions and Deletions	
Proposed Reorganization	20
2. Integrated Intake.	21



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SECTION II - SUPERVISORY EFFECTIVENESS

3.	Supervisory Effectiveness.	27
4.	Supervisors Overturn Eligibility Workers' Decisions	31
5.	Effectiveness of Department Communication.	33
6.	Written Communications	36
7.	Supervision in the Case Review Unit. . .	39

SECTION III - PERSONNEL PRACTICES

8.	Management Harrassment of Employees.	43
9.	Employee Knowledge of Rights and Benefits	45
10.	Use of Conference Reports.	49
11.	Annual Leave Time During Probationary Period.	51
12.	Flexible Work Week and Tardiness	54
13.	Sign-in Sheets	58
14.	Employee Suggestions	60
15.	Accuracy of Employee Evaluations	62
16.	Effectiveness of Department Promotional System	66
17.	Promotional Discrimination	68
18.	Number of Bargaining Units	70
19.	Salary Differences Between Eligibility Workers and Social Workers	72

SECTION IV - PERSONNEL TURNOVER

20.	Personnel Turnover.	75
21.	Reasons Given by Employees for Termination	78
22.	Cost of Turnover.	80
	Exhibit I	
	Reasons for Termination	85
	Exhibit II	
	Distribution of Terminations.	86

SECTION V - STAFFING AND WORKLOAD

23.	Potential for Layoffs	87
24.	Clerical Staff Support.	91
25.	Staffing for Seasonal Workload Demands	97
26.	Caseloads to Population Ratios.	103
27.	Worker Caseloads Comparison with Other Counties.	105
28.	Case Assignment	112

SECTION VI - FEEDBACK ON OPERATING PERFORMANCE

29.	Discrepancies in State and County Error Rate Calculations	116
30.	Case Error Rates Computed by the State	120
31.	Client Appeals to State Department of Benefit Payments	127
32.	Avoiding Client Complaints.	132
33.	Welfare Relations Officer	139
34.	Annual Report	146

SECTION VII - EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

35.	CAL-OSHA Inspection of Intake Building.	149
36.	Telephones, Office Equipment and Facilities.	151

SECTION VIII - OPERATING PROCEDURES

37.	Microfilm Project.	157
38.	Emergency Aid.	166
39.	Minimizing Disruptive Regulatory Changes.	170
40.	Home Calls Policy.	174
41.	Security Coverage.	179
42.	Bomb Threat Procedures	182
43.	Difficulties in Administering Welfare.	187
44.	Training Programs for Welfare Recipients	189

SECTION IX - HOMEMAKER/CHORE SERVICES

45.	Withheld Homemaker/Chore Services without Notice of Action.	193
46.	Operation of Homemaker/Chore Program.	196

SECTION X - DEPARTMENTAL TRAINING

47.	Tuition Reimbursement.	203
48.	Administration of Staff Training	207
49.	Social Services Training	212
50.	Foodstamp Training for Intake Staff.	217
51.	Staff Development Supervisor	220
52.	Training Assistant and Professional Staff Development Technician	224
53.	Formal Education of Top Administrators	230

<u>GLOSSARY</u>	232
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Origin of this Study and Scope of Examination

On May 3, 1977, the Health and Welfare Committee of the 1976-77 Grand Jury made an oral presentation of its April 6, 1977 Interim Report on the Department of Public Welfare to the Board of Supervisors. As a result of that report, the Management Services Section of the County Administrative Office was assigned to conduct a study to follow up on the allegations made by the Health and Welfare Committee. This report is the direct result of that assignment.

In May, our staff met with Mr. Howard Tesmer, Foreman of the Grand Jury, and Mrs. Alice Partain, Chairperson of the Health and Welfare Committee to clarify our understanding of the issues raised in the Interim Report. We subsequently isolated 72 separate and distinct issues within the 21 general points listed in the Grand Jury's April 6 Interim Report. We shared a list of these issues with Mr. Tesmer and Mrs. Partain in May, and they agreed the list represented their concerns accurately and completely.

Our study scope included an examination of each of the identified 72 issues. In addition, we examined the most recent Federal and State audit reports to determine the Department's compliance with findings and recommendations. We also planned to look into any other issues of efficiency or effectiveness that came to our attention during the study. To give balance to our evaluation of the Department, we also planned to review areas where the Department is deserving of credit for its positive accomplishments.

This report, as a result, consists of 53 separate findings and 138 recommendations. Forty-eight findings address one or more of the 72 issues raised by the Grand Jury. The other five address issues selected for examination by the County Administrative Office study team. These findings are easily identified in the text of the report by the absence of a "Grand Jury Observation" statement at the beginning of the findings. They are: #16, Effectiveness of Department Promotional System; #32, Avoiding Client Complaints; #37, Microfilm Project; #43, Difficulties in Administering Welfare, and; #44, Training Programs for Welfare Recipients.

Confidentiality of Sources

In the discussion of the Interim Report on May 3, the Board of Supervisors and County Administrative Officer made the

commitment that all contacts by Welfare Department employees with the study team would be kept confidential. This was done to reassure employees that their cooperation could not result in any management harrassment of them, and to generally promote employee participation in the study. We have adhered to this commitment. In almost every instance of personal employee grievance, this commitment has prevented us from obtaining management's side of the story to reach any firm conclusions in these particular cases. Nevertheless, these contacts provided the study team with useful information on operational issues which did contribute to the completion of the study.

State Department of Benefit Payments Study

Concurrently with the County Administrative Office study, the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP) conducted an "Integrated Reivew and Improvement Study" (IRIS) of the Fresno County Department of Public Welfare. The IRIS concept draws upon the resources of the several branches of SDBP, coordinated by the County Operations Evaluations Branch, to conduct several types of program evaluation reviews. We coordinated our review with that of the IRIS team to avoid any unnecessary duplication of effort, and to ensure that we deferred to their Welfare program expertise wherever our interests did overlap on technical issues.

The IRIS team began its field investigation on July 11, 1977 and concluded with an exit conference on September 1. Their final report is anticipated approximately December 1, 1977. The IRIS study scope concentrated on the following areas:

1. A review of randomly selected Foodstamp cases to determine the incidence of dollar and procedural errors.
2. A review of the Foodstamp certification and issuance systems to detect deficiencies.
3. Information gathering on the program for complying with Federal Civil Rights requirements.
4. Documentation and analysis of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Foodstamp operations to identify possible ways to reduce administrative costs.

Organization of County Administrative Office Report

For readability and continuity, findings have been grouped into 10 sections based upon their similarity of subject matter:

1. Department Organization
2. Supervisory Effectiveness
3. Personnel Practices
4. Personnel Turnover
5. Staffing and Workload
6. Feedback on Operating Performance
7. Equipment and Facilities
8. Operating Procedures
9. Homemaker/Chore Services
10. Departmental Training

Each of the 53 findings within these 10 sections consists of up to eight parts in the following sequence:

- Grand Jury Observation statement paraphrases the issue(s) raised in their review of the Department that is addressed in that finding.
- Finding Summary gives a brief description of that portion of the finding which responds to the Grand Jury concern or observations.
- Statement of Condition describes the factual setting surrounding the issue(s) addressed in the finding.
- Criteria shows the standards or guidelines applied by the County Administrative Office study team to evaluate the existing condition.
- Effect indicates any variance between the current condition and the criteria.
- Cause describes the study team's conclusion about the underlying reason for the effect.
- Recommendation(s) show steps needed to remedy the cause of the situation.
- In instances where the Welfare Director had comments on certain findings, a Department Comment gives additional information or describes action to date.

A summary of the findings within each section of the report follows in the remainder of this introduction. For a more

detailed review of the basis for each recommendation, the reader should refer to the particular findings in the main body of the report.

A glossary of frequently used abbreviations appears at the end of this report.

Department Organization (pp. 1-20)

Our study included a review of the distribution of responsibilities among the Department's middle managers, and their authority to carry out their duties. We considered whether responsibilities were appropriately located for greatest effectiveness, whether authority was sufficient and appropriate to accomplish their assignments, and whether they were devoting sufficient time to priority activities.

We concluded, as explained in finding #1 on Organization, that many department managers are underutilized, while others are spread too thin to be as effective as possible. Many functions and organizational subunits are not being effectively utilized, or are substantially under-realizing their potential for productivity and/or accuracy of work. Decisions are made too far above the levels affected by them to adequately anticipate their consequences. Not all of the Department's management knowledge and skills are being drawn upon for ideas and recommendations by the decision making level for consideration before decisions are made.

We feel this situation is a result of a reluctance to delegate authority over the years as the Department grew and additional management layers were added to coordinate operations. There is also an unmet need to adjust the organization to new demands of size and program placed upon it. We propose to update the current organization as shown in Exhibit I (pp. 6-12) to that depicted in Exhibit II (pp. 13-19). Many of the problems discussed later in this report in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division can only be adequately addressed if an additional Assistant Director position is established to permit increased management attention to be directed to both divisions. All other management position additions that would result from this reorganization would be offset by an equal number of management position deletions as shown in Exhibit III (page 20).

"Integrated Intake" is the term used to describe how the Department is organized to process applications for financial assistance programs. Its principal features are that most Eligibility Workers assigned there are of the most experienced level, and are expected to process any kind of aid application so that applicants do not have to be shuffled from one worker

to another or from one office to another, to be able to file an application for the program(s) in which they are interested.

We found that AFDC error rates for Integrated Intake as computed by the Department's Case Review Unit are excessive (ranging from 21% to 29% in the quarter ending June 30, 1977). A special study last year showed similar performance with Medi-Cal cases. As discussed in finding #27, Worker Case-loads Comparison with Other Counties, Intake also spends considerably more time per case than the statewide average. We believe Intake should be reorganized to improve the quality and productivity of its work.

The Intake process should be organized to provide a high level of responsiveness to applicants, in terms of addressing their needs and minimizing the time they spend waiting and interviewing. It should also promote efficient processing of applications.

Written case management procedures for preparing applications are incomplete and workers forget aspects of proper procedures as they process applications from program to program. Many workers find it difficult to organize their work to complete it quickly and accurately. Small details for each of the programs make big differences in whether the case is processed accurately, and it is difficult for workers to keep aware of them all and yet keep them sorted out.

A persistent weakness in client service that Integrated Intake has not minimized is the number of times applicants have to come back to the office to meet with their worker. Waiting time would be a secondary inconvenience to the applicant if the process were organized to process their application more smoothly in fewer, shorter contacts.

We believe specialization should be introduced to "case processing" in Intake, utilizing Eligibility Workers I and II to work on a single program. Eligibility Workers III could be used as screeners to determine client referral to the appropriate program type of case processor.

Supervisory Effectiveness (pp. 27-42)

The responsibilities of supervisory and middle management staff, like line personnel, are not clearly spelled out except in classification specifications. This absence of standards and expectations is more serious with supervisors and middle managers than with line personnel where regulations, regular routines and forms permit the development of some intuitive consensus of job requirements among workers and their supervisors.

We found top administrators possessed considerable welfare knowledge and expertise. They have demonstrated rational and purposeful decision making. However, we found them making personnel and case decisions such as employee evaluation reviews and intervention in eligibility decisions on a case rather than policy basis, that appear to be more appropriately handled at lower levels. This reluctance to delegate, at least to some middle managers, is a symptom of possible marginal supervisor and middle manager performance. It may also reflect a management style that does not trust subordinate judgment, and the resulting lack of delegation may be depriving middle managers of the experience they need to develop their decision making skills.

Many middle managers are permitted to pass complex case decisions up the line when department policy is not really at issue. Many such managers are not sufficiently familiar with regulations they are supposed to administer. They are not being held accountable for their performance and that of their subordinates.

Evaluation of supervisors and middle managers appears based more upon the number of mistakes they make that happen to come to the attention of higher management than upon positive accomplishments or broader, ongoing assessments. Criteria for supervisor and middle manager performance evaluations are not spelled out. This situation can result in supervisor and middle manager manipulation of impressions top managers form of subordinate personnel performance. This situation is accentuated by a prevailing top-down management style which accumulates little feedback or control information on performance of subordinate levels.

Morale of many workers is adversely affected when supervisors and middle managers do not deal with problems adequately. This results in lost respect for management and occasional confrontations with otherwise productive workers as well as underachievers. Worker performance, at least in case work quality and perhaps productivity varies substantially among Eligibility Worker units. This occurs both in Intake where all employees are experienced level workers, and in Ongoing where there is a preponderance of relatively new employees.

Top management is distracted from its responsibilities for planning, organizing and controlling the Department by having to deal with matters that it is reluctant to delegate to some middle managers.

Superior and subordinate employees should reach a consensus of job expectations for the subordinate. These completed job expectations should be reviewed by the second level manager and modified if necessary. Supervisors and middle managers should be evaluated periodically, based upon these

job expectation statements by the immediate next level manager. Management should utilize independent feedback information for these evaluations to the greatest extent possible. The Department should develop a continuing management training program for supervisory and management level employees. The Department should take full advantage of the tuition reimbursement program, workshops and seminars, and inhouse training programs to meet the management training needs of its supervisory and middle management personnel.

The information on the frequency of supervisors overturning eligibility decisions was not conclusive. It should be noted that an important dimension of supervision is to review the work of subordinates to screen out errors of omission and commission and see that they are corrected.

During interviews with Eligibility Workers, we discussed the question of whether unit supervisors have inappropriately reversed client eligibility decisions of Eligibility Workers. Most employees agree that this has happened in the past, but in most instances, they said it had happened to someone else or they were unable to cite specific cases we could evaluate. Those that we were able to track down were not conclusive because there were legitimate questions in those case circumstances as to how regulations should be applied.

When this issue was discussed with Eligibility Supervisors, they agreed that sometimes it is necessary to reverse an Eligibility Worker's decision. The supervisors stated that sometimes the worker feels that the client is not revealing all information and they deny aid. However, aid must be allowed if there is no contradictory evidence so the decision would be reversed.

The Director should issue a statement to staff on his policy of support for the actions and decisions of employees made in the course of performing their duties. It should address accountability, and distinguish between misconduct and genuine differences of professional judgment in applying departmental policies and program regulations to case management.

There are regular meetings between administrative staff and line personnel where current information is conveyed to the staff. However, it appears that reasons for decisions could more adequately be relayed to employees in order to encourage implementation of procedures, directives and case decisions by relying less upon verbal communications.

The size of the Welfare Department (over 600 employees) makes communications to all of its employees a difficult task. The constant introduction of a high number of new employees into the Department (approximately 150 per year) also makes effective communications more difficult and important.

The Department should continue to utilize regular monthly and weekly meetings as a means of communication. An agenda with background information and space for notes should be utilized in order to increase uniformity of information.

Administrative and supervisory staff should be encouraged to give explanations for individual case decisions they make in a complete and positive manner designed to foster compliance with the decision by the affected employee, and to ensure the circumstances are properly narrated in the case.

The General Relief program, which is totally financed by the County, is administered under guidelines developed and interpreted by the Department. Since it is a County program, it is not subject to State or Federal audit. Concern has been indicated by employees that regulations are not always consistently interpreted for all clients who may be eligible under this program. We have not been able to pursue these concerns without compromising the confidentiality of employee interviews. We recommend the County Auditor-Controller conduct a financial audit of the General Relief program.

Administrative staff from the Welfare Administrative Supervisor I (WAS I) level through the Assistant Director do not have assigned secretarial help. Only the Director has a secretary. Many of the administrative staff spend considerable time performing clerical duties, such as typing and filing. Secretarial assistance for Welfare Administrative Supervisor and Assistant Director positions should be established. The new Director indicates this may be accomplished by diverting personnel from the steno pool and reducing the amount of typing of narrative in social services cases.

Top management responsibilities in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division, and to a lesser degree in the Social Services Division, include a heavy proportion of staff type responsibilities for line management personnel which detracts from the effective accomplishment of all management functions.

A financial aid program specialist position should be established to perform staff responsibilities to analyze legislation and regulations, and recommend the appropriate department policy of interpretation of regulations for use by line eligibility staff. This position should maintain a department policy manual of these interpretations, and assist in developing productivity standards and optimal case management procedure standards for line eligibility staff. We also recommend a specialist for the Social Services Division to perform similar tasks.

The distribution of responsibilities between the supervisor of the Case Review Unit and the Eligibility Worker III

coordinator in the unit could be spelled out more carefully, though it has been substantially clarified by past practice. The Department should take steps to formalize this organizational arrangement or relieve the Case Review Supervisor of several peripheral assignments and permit him to resume all supervisory duties for Case Review.

There is a possibility that the Eligibility Worker III coordinator in the Case Review Unit has been used out of class to establish a new position function which does not have organizational clearance from the County Administrative Office as provided by the County Charter, or budgetary approval of the Board of Supervisors. Nevertheless, there appears to be considerable justification for the assignment under the present distribution of duties to the Case Review Supervisor.

The County Administrative Officer should propose changes to the Administrative Code which would specify the definition of organizational changes subject to his review, and the procedure departments are to follow to present their proposals in a timely fashion.

Personnel Practices (pp. 43-74)

Welfare Department management and supervisory personnel have not received refresher training sufficient to keep abreast of current personnel management practices. Reluctance by some immediate supervisors to take direct responsibility for disciplinary action of subordinates has brought about intervention by high level managers to deal with personnel problems. Such action may be viewed by employees as "harrassment". The Department should hold immediate supervisory personnel responsible for dealing with personnel difficulties of immediate subordinates. The Department should also use all available means such as conferences, seminars, training sessions, and staff meetings to improve communications and working relationships between management and line staff.

The Welfare Department currently has no uniform application of policy dealing with tardiness. Inconsistent application of disciplinary actions concerning tardiness have resulted in employees feeling that preferential treatment exists, particularly as it relates to the removal of employees from the flex week schedule. The Department should ensure that employees be docked time for unauthorized tardiness regardless whether disciplinary action is taken. Disciplinary actions for excessive tardiness or absenteeism should be taken in accordance with Personnel Rules and procedures. Employees unable to adjust to the flex week schedule should be placed on the conventional 5-day, 40-hour week.

The Department had used sign-in sheets primarily to monitor attendance of employees. Its purpose was complicated by the implementation of the flex work week and its use became an annoyance to employees. Department management has reviewed the use of sign-in sheets and has discontinued the practice. The Department should hold supervisors responsible for monitoring employee adherence to authorized work schedules and for maintaining attendance records.

Welfare Department managers/supervisors do not have a common understanding of criteria against which employees may be evaluated. Compliance with the Department's evaluation policy (which provides a foundation for a useful and productive evaluation system) has not always been followed, particularly as it relates to the resolution of differences between raters and reviewers. Management has made a minimal commitment to make the evaluation system as positive and productive as possible which adversely affects morale, productivity and growth of job skills and turnover rate. Department management should ensure adherence by supervisors to its evaluation policy. Supervisory personnel designated as raters should be able to evaluate subordinates without undue influence from higher level reviewing managers. The Personnel Management Division should address the issue of how best to define and coordinate the roles of the reviewing and rating supervisors when a County-wide employee performance evaluation plan is developed as recommended by the Cresap, McCormick and Paget report on the Personnel Management system.

Promotions within the Eligibility Worker and Social Worker series classes were reviewed. Promotional actions have been in accordance with Personnel Rules and no instances of discrimination against union representatives were discovered.

Welfare Department employees are represented by four bargaining units. The determination of bargaining units in the Department is the result of agreement between the Board of Supervisors, employee representatives and the former Employee Relations Commission--all in adherence to the County's Employee Relations Ordinance and the Meyers, Milius Brown Act. The County should continue this arrangement.

Welfare Department salaries for Eligibility and Social Worker classes are determined through negotiations between employee representative units and the County. The salary setting process provides adequate mechanisms to identify and correct gross inequities in compensation among different classes within the same bargaining units. Eligibility and Social Worker salaries appear to be at appropriate levels for the type of duties performed.

Personnel Turnover (pp. 75-86)

The high rate of personnel turnover in the Eligibility Worker series in the Welfare Department should be reduced. Of a

total of 620 employees in the Department, 137 (22.4%) terminated their County service during the 1976-77 fiscal year. Eligibility Workers accounted for 65% of these terminations. The Department should strive to reduce turnover by expanding the variety of assignments available to Eligibility Workers, and by attempting to select career oriented candidates to fill job openings.

Employees terminating their services with the County may have more than one reason, but usually state the one that is most important to them. The primary reason most often given on termination notices was to take another job (46%). It is not possible to determine personal motives for resignations with any great certainty if they are related to job dissatisfaction because of the frequent hesitancy on the part of the person who is leaving to create a bad climate surrounding his departure by criticizing his supervisor or the Department. The Department should experiment with methods such as exit evaluation interviews to both give the employee an honest and constructive assessment of his strengths and weaknesses and to obtain feedback on the causes of turnover.

Physical work conditions do affect morale and can be a contributing factor in an employee's decision to resign. However, there are other more direct factors which cause turnover that can accentuate or offset any effect physical work condition upgrading may have to alleviate turnover. Therefore, costs of turnover and physical condition upgrading are not direct tradeoffs. Facilities should be provided, however, which at least do not accentuate morale problems, and which permit the level of delivery of service desired by the Board of Supervisors in a safe and efficient manner.

The Welfare Department should examine all its alternatives for encouraging employees to stay with the Department and pursue those with immediate potential effects and the greatest cost benefit potential. If the County cannot afford additional interim space for the Welfare Department, priority should be placed on minor alterations of existing facilities to improve service delivery, efficiency and employee morale in the Department.

Staffing and Workload (pp. 87-115)

The State requires the County to abide by strict administrative cost controls to be eligible for State subventions. Workload is the factor that determines staffing levels the State will reimburse. Staff time lost from subpoenaed appearances before the Grand Jury did not cause the State to sanction funding of County welfare administrative costs.

Under cost containment, the Department could suffer serious long-term effects if it permits staff to workload ratios to

fall above or below State specified tolerance levels. The Department should conduct a continuing cost containment analysis to supply line administrators with the information needed to set hiring quotas, shift Eligibility Workers among programs or between Intake and Ongoing, or conduct layoffs if required.

Clerical staff support to Eligibility Workers is less than other comparable county welfare departments. Clerical support to Social Workers appears appropriate when compared to other counties, but information is not sufficient to determine whether this is also true for Child Protective Services social casework activity in particular.

The levels of clerical support to Eligibility Workers vary greatly among counties because of differing levels of computer support. Fresno utilizes the Case Data System which automatically generates letters and reminders for Eligibility Worker staff that were formerly performed by clerks. Other counties rely on manual systems to a greater extent.

The Department should experiment with different clerical to eligibility staffing configurations to find the most cost beneficial arrangement, explore alternatives for reducing staff time invested in time-consuming case management practices, and establish goals to improve productivity.

The Department currently hires employees throughout the year and is beginning to shift employees between sections to compensate for workload fluctuations. However, management does not have as much flexibility in staffing for the busier winter season by not being able to hire trained and experienced seasonal help. The Department should study the feasibility of recurrent staff for seasonal requirements, and if desirable, work with the Personnel Management Division to develop a recurrent civil service status in Fresno County with separate recruitments. A recurrent employee is one who is hired to work full-time for only part of the year, and would be permitted to proportionately accrue rights and benefits including step advances on the same basis as a full-time permanent employee.

A review and comparison of AFDC-FG caseloads with the other San Joaquin Valley counties indicates Fresno does not have an unusual number of cases or persons aided. Comparisons with statewide caseloads and comparable counties shows Fresno and San Joaquin Valley counties tend to have a higher incidence of AFDC clients than elsewhere in the State. Fresno County has the lowest rate of errors in granting AFDC to ineligible families among the 14 largest counties.

Statistics indicate AFDC Intake caseloads and Non-Assistance Foodstamp (NAFS) caseloads per worker are substantially below other counties, while AFDC Ongoing productivity is considerably higher than most of the State. Statewide

statistics on Social Worker caseloads are not available, and results of a survey of other counties are not conclusive.

The Department needs to increase its efforts to balance Eligibility Worker staffing to workload both within and between programs.

Caseloads are assigned based upon either an average number of cases per worker or a combination of average caseload and alphabetical or geographic case assignment. Cases are distributed by type of program, but not by the degree of individual case complexity.

The Department should exercise greater flexibility in the assignment of workers to cover absences, or more flexibility in the assignment of cases among workers, to ensure clients receive services in a timely fashion and disproportionate workloads are not created among Eligibility Workers.

Alternative methods for assigning Spanish speaking only clients to bi-lingual Eligibility Workers should be explored to ensure maximum utilization of Eligibility Worker bi-lingual skills to the benefit of the client and for the efficiency of the Department.

Feedback on Operating Performance (pp. 116-148)

The difference between error rates calculated by the State Department of Benefit Payments Quality Control Bureau and the internal Welfare Department Case Review Unit results from the difference in definition of "errors" used by the two agencies. Case Review "errors" are broadly defined and do not necessarily indicate eligibility or grant errors actually exist. They identify weaknesses in documentation that could result in eligibility or grant errors, inconsistently interpreted regulations, and omissions of needed data. State Quality Control error rates reflect actual grant or eligibility errors in sampled cases existing at the time the cases are analyzed. This distinction results in higher Case Review "error rates" than State Quality Control error rates, but is more useful as an internal control mechanism because it detects weaknesses that could result in eligibility or grant errors.

The Department has experimented and refined its AFDC Case Review activities into an excellent system, and has recently achieved the second lowest overall error rate among the 14 largest counties in the State as determined by State Quality Control. The Department should evaluate the desirability of using this internal control technique in other County interest programs such as General Relief and Homemaker/Chore.

The Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) specifies the sample size and error analysis techniques used by the State Quality Control Program for AFDC. A historical review of Fresno County and statewide data appears consistent and supports the general validity of the system. An evaluation of the Department's eligibility and grant accuracy as determined by State Quality Control is found in finding #30.

The State recently began quality control surveys in the other two major aid categories administered by the counties, Foodstamps and Medi-Cal. These two evaluation programs have provided minimal data and are undergoing further refinement.

The number of appeals filed and the number of Fair Hearings held in Fresno County are higher per 1,000 cases than comparable counties. However, the percentage of cases decided in favor of clients (57.7%) is less than comparable counties. Eligibility Workers responsible for cases at the time an appeal is generated are not involved with a case once it is forwarded to the Appeals Unit, and no regular summary is distributed explaining issues lost at hearings or stipulated.

It would appear unnecessary time is expended at hearings by Appeals staff, State personnel and the client because Eligibility Workers and their supervisors have no incentive to resolve issues within their authority because they need not defend their decisions when appealed. The Appeals Unit Eligibility Worker should continue to represent the Department at Fair Hearings, while the original Eligibility Worker should retain case administration responsibility for that client. Regular (monthly) reports should be prepared summarizing the results of appeals.

Some units have a higher incidence of cases exceeding the 45 day application processing deadline, complaints processed by the Welfare Relations Officer and Fair Hearings filed. It is difficult to isolate specific causes due to factors such as worker/client personality clashes, job experience and knowledge of the worker, leadership of the unit, and program rules and regulations.

The Department should follow-up on all complaints by examining circumstances that cause the complaint to be lodged. This information should be analyzed to determine what measures can be taken to minimize client complaints and in what units these measures should be applied.

We found the Welfare Relations Officer is accessible to clients and complainants and is fair in dealing with complaints about Welfare programs. The Welfare Relations Officer resolves most complaints received within three working days.

His findings do not spare the Department when it is in error, though increasing the distribution of his reports within the

Department could be helpful in directing attention to problem areas. During the investigation of complaints, the Welfare Relations Officer can identify regulations that are not being interpreted consistently and employees in need of additional training or attitude counseling. This information should be used by appropriate management levels.

The Department does not have a published document on departmental goals and objectives, or an annual report. Employees may not understand the Department's purpose nor the significance of their own positions and job performance. The lack of an official annual report of activities of the Department does not promote the public's understanding of the Department's role in the community. The Department should develop a statement of its goals and objectives and produce a general report of departmental operations on an annual basis.

Equipment and Facilities (pp. 149-156)

After discussing possible safety hazards at the Intake building with the Department, the Grand Jury requested the State Division of Industrial Safety perform a CAL-OSHA inspection. This was done to identify and correct any deficiencies as expeditiously as possible.

Nine violations, classified by the State as non-serious, were noted. All the cited safety deficiencies have been corrected. The Department should work with the County Safety Officer, Public Works and the Purchasing Agent in detecting and correcting safety deficiencies.

The Department generally has sufficient office equipment. However, some additional typewriters and calculators are needed and are being purchased. The replacement of obsolete and worn equipment has been minimal and has not been based on a systematic replacement schedule. Irregular or inadequate replacement of office equipment can result in more frequent repairs and loss in employee productivity due to equipment downtime. The Welfare Department should develop a phased office equipment replacement program. The County Administrative Office should study and evaluate the need for a County policy on replacement of office equipment.

Additional office space is needed, particularly for the Intake Section and Social Services Division. Overcrowded working conditions, lack of privacy for phone conversations, and the lack of private interview booths adversely affect employee morale and decrease the Department's ability to serve clients efficiently, promptly and confidentially. The Department should continue to work with the Administrative Office to develop an acceptable alternative for providing office space relief for the Department.

Operating Procedures (pp. 157-192)

The Welfare Department implemented a microfilm program in March, 1976 to reduce record volume growth which was exceeding the capacity of the Department's storage facilities, and to reduce retrieval time and improve document accessibility. Welfare case documents must by law be retained for a six to eight year period. While microfilming has arrested the increase in need for record storage space, filing of paper documents is still the prevalent form of storage and there still exists serious problems in accessibility and retrieval of paper files and legibility of filmed documents.

The ongoing microfilming of new additional active case documents is costing four times the amount required to store paper documents in additional leased space over the life of the records. The Welfare Department should establish a records archive to store inactive case files and computer documents off-site. The Department should also re-evaluate the continued use of the microfilm system in light of the economic disadvantages raised in this study.

Immediate need emergency aid must be granted to applicants eligible under the AFDC program. Emergency aid under the General Relief program is granted in the form of rent or utility guarantees, or grocery orders, to needy persons or families not eligible for AFDC. Detection of possible fraud before granting AFDC immediate need is difficult. Intake staff must, by law, grant AFDC immediate need aid if the unverified facts presented by the client indicate eligibility. The Welfare Department should continue to screen applicants in a reasonable manner consistent with program regulations.

County Welfare Department administrators have been active participants in various committees of the California Welfare Director's Association (CWDA), which has been an active force in affecting welfare regulations in the State. The Director should encourage welfare supervisory staff to submit, through channels, comments and suggestions on current Welfare regulations in need of change that the CWDA should consider.

The criteria for making home calls to interview clients for eligibility is not clearly defined by the Welfare Department. Workers use their own discretion to decide on the necessity of home calls for eligibility determination or whether to make a referral of a case to the District Attorney Family Support Division's Special Investigative Unit (SIU) for pre-eligibility (fraud) investigation. The Department does not share with the client that his case is referred to the SIU for eligibility investigation unless the client has inquired. The Department should establish policy concerning responsibility and necessity for making home calls, considering whether pre-eligibility investigation by the SIU can be avoided by an appropriate home call. The Department should

also re-evaluate its policy of not sharing with the client that the case was referred to the SIU for investigation.

Security coverage for the Welfare complex could be made more effective by modifying the security guard assignment and training employees to properly control minor disruption by clients.

Bomb threat procedures do not ensure consistent, complete and orderly evacuation of buildings. The Department should develop its emergency response plans and policies in coordination with the County's Safety Officer and provide that they address preparations for fire, earthquake, bomb threats, and other emergencies. The Department should hold periodic drills to ensure effectiveness of evacuation and other emergency response plans.

Continuous legislative changes at the Federal and State levels have resulted in a steady stream of changes to program regulations. Because of these numerous changes, workers are prone to make errors, morale is lowered, training efforts are much more difficult, and supervisors have greater difficulty in monitoring caseloads. Recommendations offered in Section II, Supervisory Effectiveness, and Section X, Departmental Training, are intended to assist the Department in dealing more effectively with regulation and program changes.

Homemaker/Chore Services (pp. 193-202)

The Homemaker/Chore program provides services to adults who would otherwise be unable to adequately care for themselves in their homes. The State has retained too much interest and authority over detailed administrative matters in the program and has not adequately delegated to counties, or set standards for local operation and accountability. This has resulted in service disruptions to clients, additional administrative costs and funding shortages in the program.

The State's practice of funding this open-ended program with a closed-end allocation, coupled with the projection that the State funding allocation for Fresno was insufficient to meet anticipated demands for service through the 1976-77 year, prompted an administrative decision to delay official written notification of eligibility and commencement of service to 186 eligible applicants in March and April of 1977. While this decision controlled the increase in expenditure rates, it resulted in the delay of homemaker services to eligible applicants and was in conflict with State Department of Health regulations requiring written notification of eligibility to applicants.

The Department should conform to State regulations and notify the State Department of Benefit Payments as soon as possible

of projected shortages in funds and obtain their directions on appropriate measures to be taken.

The County should continue its efforts to secure sustaining levels of State and Federal funding for the program. The County should also seek amendments to State law to allow County discretion in awarding multi-year contracts for homemaker/chore services to maintain continuity of service by minimizing the necessity for rebidding. The Department should also request comprehensive standards from the State concerning service level determination clarification of regulations, and appropriate division of responsibility, authority and accountability.

Departmental Training (pp. 203-231)

Fresno County should, on a trail basis, provide a list of courses approved for tuition reimbursement. This could simplify the tuition reimbursement application process, encourage employees to increase their training, and thereby improve their job performance.

The Personnel Rules give a broader definition of reimbursable courses than the Administrative Code. The County should clarify its tuition reimbursement objectives as stated in these two documents so that uniform criteria for approval of requests can be properly applied.

New employees are assigned to units without previous training. Periodic training sessions on major regulation changes are conducted to inform staff and/or meet State training requirements. Minor changes in regulations or procedures are discussed in unit meetings by unit supervisors. Procedures are sometimes interpreted differently when instructions are passed orally to the units.

A special four week training course for all new Eligibility Workers should be developed utilizing Federal training funds. Afterwards, they should be assigned to a designated training unit to acquaint the new employee with case management activities prior to regular unit assignment.

Instructions on new procedures and regulations should be written and each employee affected should receive a copy.

There is no systematic review of whether Social Workers are fully trained for their assigned job. A job training profile developed for Social Workers should be used consistently for each type of assignment to define employee training.

We concur with the Department's conclusion that supervisory staff are in the best position to delivery ongoing staff training. To enhance their effectiveness, they should receive training on conducting training sessions.

SECTION I. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

1. ORGANIZATION

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The classifications and positions of Welfare Administrative Supervisor II (WAS II) and WAS III should be combined. The Welfare Department is top heavy with management personnel and could be trimmed if they were made more effective.

FINDING SUMMARY

We concur in the Grand Jury's conclusion that the WAS III level has become an unnecessary layer of management in the Department's chain of command. We have concluded, however, that the Department's total complement of middle level managers is appropriate to the needs of operations, but is not optimally distributed to provide appropriate direction and staff support to all sections within the Department.

Many of the problems discussed later in this report in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division and Business and Fiscal Services Division can only be adequately addressed if an additional Assistant Director position is established to permit increased management attention to be directed to both divisions.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The current organization of the Department of Public Welfare is depicted in Exhibits I-A through I-G. These exhibits show the typical major responsibilities of the managers and/or organizational units depicted as well as reporting relationships. Exhibit I-A shows the immediate subordinates to the Director, two of which lead the major portion of the Department. One is the Assistant Director for the Eligibility and Grant Services Division and the Business and Fiscal Services Division. Another is the Assistant Director for the Social Services Division. The other two subordinates head selected special administrative services including the Case Review Unit which conducts quality control reviews of all Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cases.

Exhibit I-B, I-E, I-F and I-G depict in greater detail the variety, quantity, and complexity of functions for which the

Assistant Director for Eligibility is responsible. These include all financial assistance programs which are administered by an "Intake" Section which in-processes all applicants for financial assistance to determine eligibility and initial benefit levels, and an "Ongoing" Section which administers the cases of all established clients to monitor continuing eligibility and adjust aid levels as client needs and resources change. The Assistant Director for Eligibility also supervises the Business Manager who is responsible for payroll, personnel records and administrative claims. The Senior Data Processing Coordinator also reports to this Assistant Director with such functions as data conversion and control for the Department's data processing systems, records maintenance, microfilming, statistics, and system maintenance and development coordination. In all, the Assistant Director for Eligibility superintends the functions which account for approximately 475 of the Department's 620 employees (76%).

Exhibit I-C depicts the functions for which the Assistant Director for Social Services is responsible. These include the activities of the Staff Development Supervisor, the Child Welfare Supervisor, and a WAS II who primarily oversees social services delivery to adults or families. There are three middle management positions in this structure between the Assistant Director and some 16 Social Work Supervisors and units who provide a wide variety of types of social services (10 mandated and 4 optional). This Division also carries considerable community liaison and outside resource coordination responsibilities which subtract from the time middle managers may devote to the direction of service delivery activities.

Exhibit I-D depicts in greater detail the special administrative and support functions which report to the Director. The significance of this arrangement is two-fold: the Department Head's secretary is the only secretary available to supply stenographic and other secretarial services to managers, and Case Review is an internal audit activity of AFDC financial aid cases which is independent of the Eligibility and Grant Services Division it monitors.

As part of the evaluation of the Department's organization, we solicited the views of the Department's management personnel on a confidential basis. We surveyed their responsibilities, and their authority to carry out their duties. We considered whether responsibilities were appropriately located for greatest effectiveness, whether authority was sufficient and appropriate to accomplish their assignments, and whether they were devoting sufficient time to priority activities. We received excellent cooperation from this staff in the form of candid and conscientious responses. The following are key points we obtained from these personnel:

Eligibility and Grant Services Division and Business and Fiscal Services Division

- Little authority has been delegated to carry out the responsibilities that would be implied by their position in the organization. Delineation of responsibilities between levels is not clear.
- The administrative structure is in large measure a pipeline to carry issues to higher echelon levels for determination where policy has frequently not been spelled out or the decision authority has been retained by the Director or Assistant Director (such as internal reassignment of personnel and promotions).
- Middle managers are not held accountable for the performance of their operations.
- Routine public inquiries are distributed to all management levels in a volume that causes considerable distraction and disruption to effective management.
- Managers have both line and staff assignments and frequently performance in one area must be compromised to fulfill an assignment or need in the other. Often both types of responsibilities (direction and control versus planning and research) receive divided and, thus, insufficient attention.
- The span of control of some managers such as the WAS III's and some WAS I's does not substantiate their need. The span of control for others is too broad to effectively supervise some resources such as clerical support.
- Managers most affected by policy or program changes often do not provide input in their formulation.
- Some relatively small or first line delivery functions report too high in the organization to be effectively supervised, or place disproportionate demands on the time of higher level managers.
- Some managers do not have authority over functions which directly affect the timeliness and accuracy of the functions they do supervise.
- Use of committees goes beyond information dissemination and coordination roles to include responsibility dispersal.

Social Services Division

- The only true "staff" position (absence of line authority) in the Department is assigned to this Division.

- Some department-wide personnel functions are in this Division.
- Out-of-office activities of the Division's top managers leave Social Services Supervisors with considerable responsibility for day to day case management and quality control.
- There are only three middle managers with line authority in this Division between the Assistant Director and first line supervisors.

Special Administrative Services

- Some department-wide support functions report to the Department Head secretary and detract from her capability to enhance the effectiveness of top managers.
- Case review effectiveness as an internal audit control function would be enhanced if other internal control operations were consolidated with it such as appeals, social services compliance reviews, and the review of financial assistance programs not presently being conducted.

CRITERIA

Management personnel responsibilities should be distributed to account not only for their span of control, but for the complexity and variety of programs and operations they administer. They should also tend to be grouped to give managers control over all functions which are essential to the accomplishment of their basic mission.

When line departments reach a size where staff functions consume the time of managers to the extent of several full-time equivalent positions, it is desirable to specialize these functions in positions with purely staff assignments. Line and staff responsibilities can be divided and accountability pinpointed to improve the performance of both line managers and staff support.

Sufficient authority should be delegated to managers to equip them to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

The level in the organization to which a function reports should be based primarily on the level of management attention which must be given to that function. This principle is secondary only to requirements of internal control.

The concept of independent internal audit and control functions is sound. The Department of Public Welfare is of sufficient size to justify this specialization.

EFFECT

Many Department managers are underutilized in the current organization, while others are spread too thin to be as effective as their individual capacities would suggest.

Many functions and organizational subunits are not being effectively utilized, or are substantially under-realizing their potential for productivity and/or accuracy of work.

Decisions are made too far above the levels affected by them to adequately anticipate their consequences. Not all of the Department's "best thinking" is percolating to the decision making level for consideration before decisions are made.

CAUSE

The current organizational arrangement is a reflection of the top-down management style of the former Director, and a reluctance to delegate authority over the years as the Department grew and additional management layers were added to oversee operations.

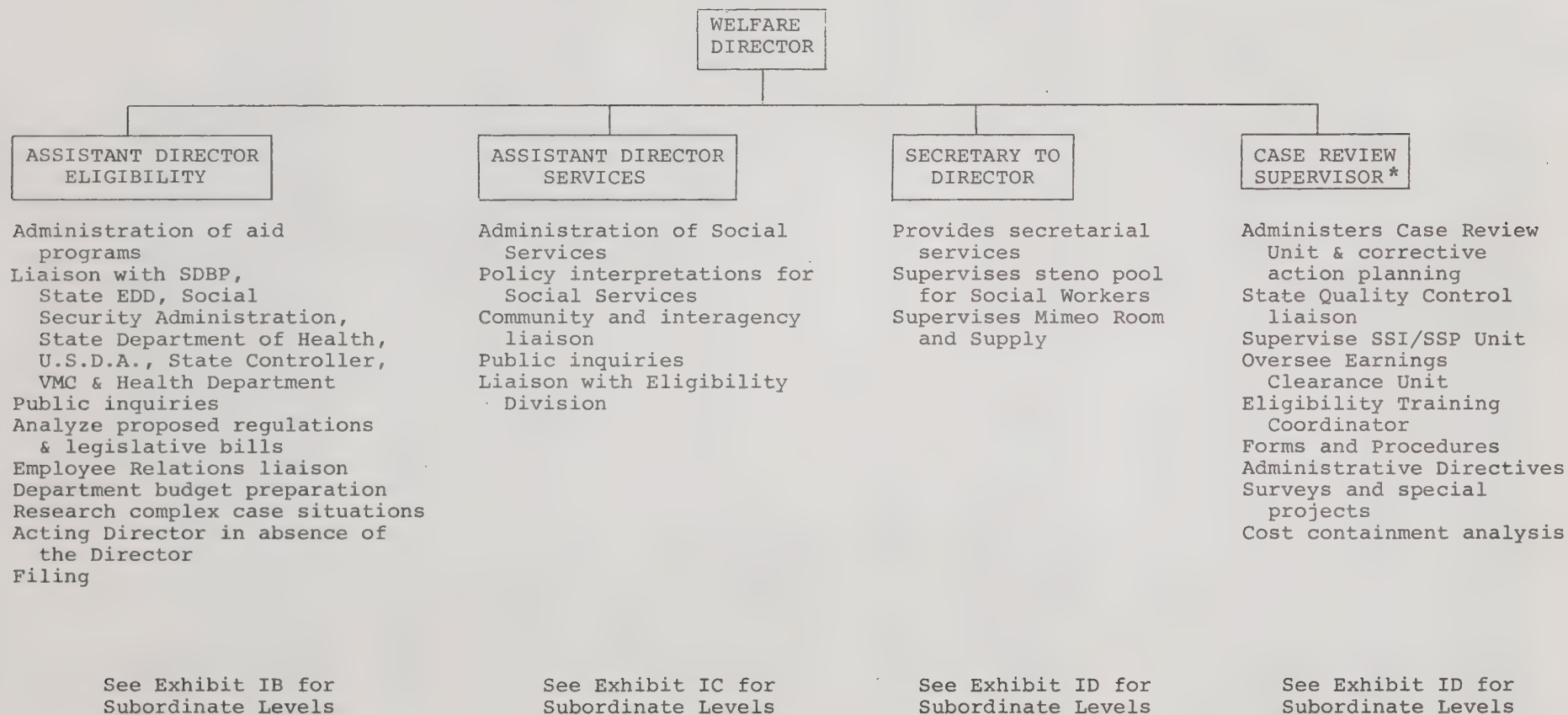
The Department's organization could have been better adjusted over the years to meet new challenges and demands placed upon it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board approve the reorganization of the Department as depicted in Exhibits II-A through II-E, which will redistribute management resources to address demands on the organization.
2. That the Board approve in principle the addition of one position of Assistant Director, subject to classification review by the Personnel Management Division. Exhibit III shows 11 other position additions also required by this organizational change, also subject to classification review by the Personnel Management Division, and an equal number of position deletions to offset them.
3. That the Personnel Management Division conduct a review of all management positions in the Department of Public Welfare to identify any appropriate adjustments in classification specifications that may be indicated by changes in duties resulting from this reorganization.

EXHIBIT I-A

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE EXISTING ORGANIZATION

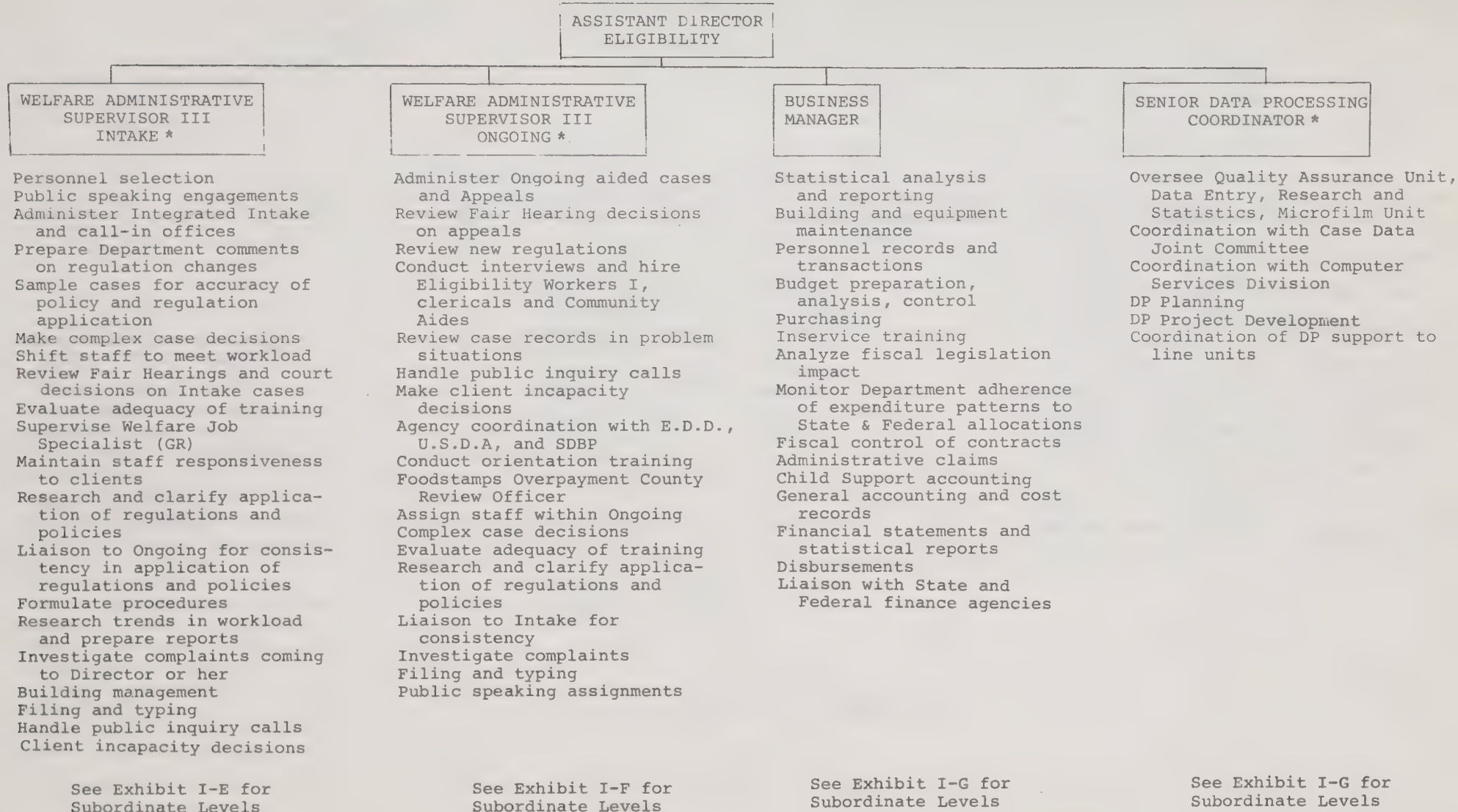


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EXHIBIT I-B

EXISTING ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT DIVISION ORGANIZATION

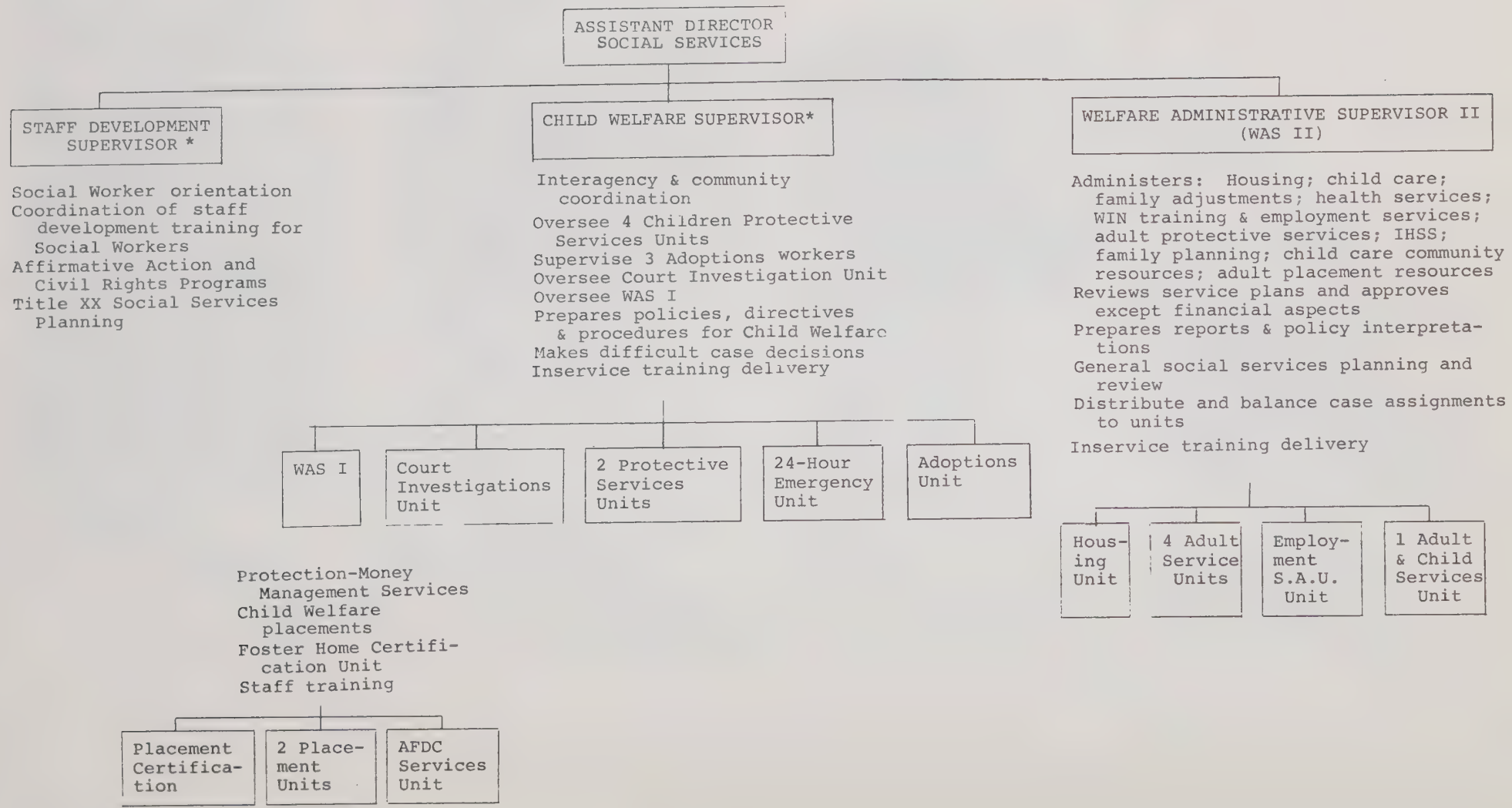
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE



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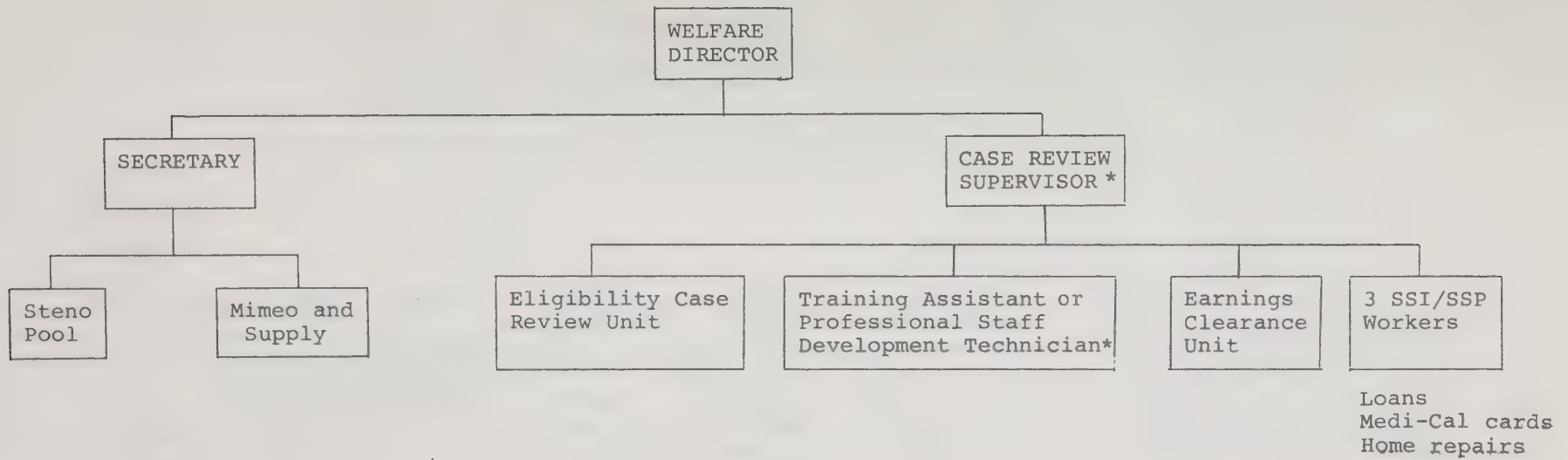
EXHIBIT I-C

EXISTING WELFARE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION



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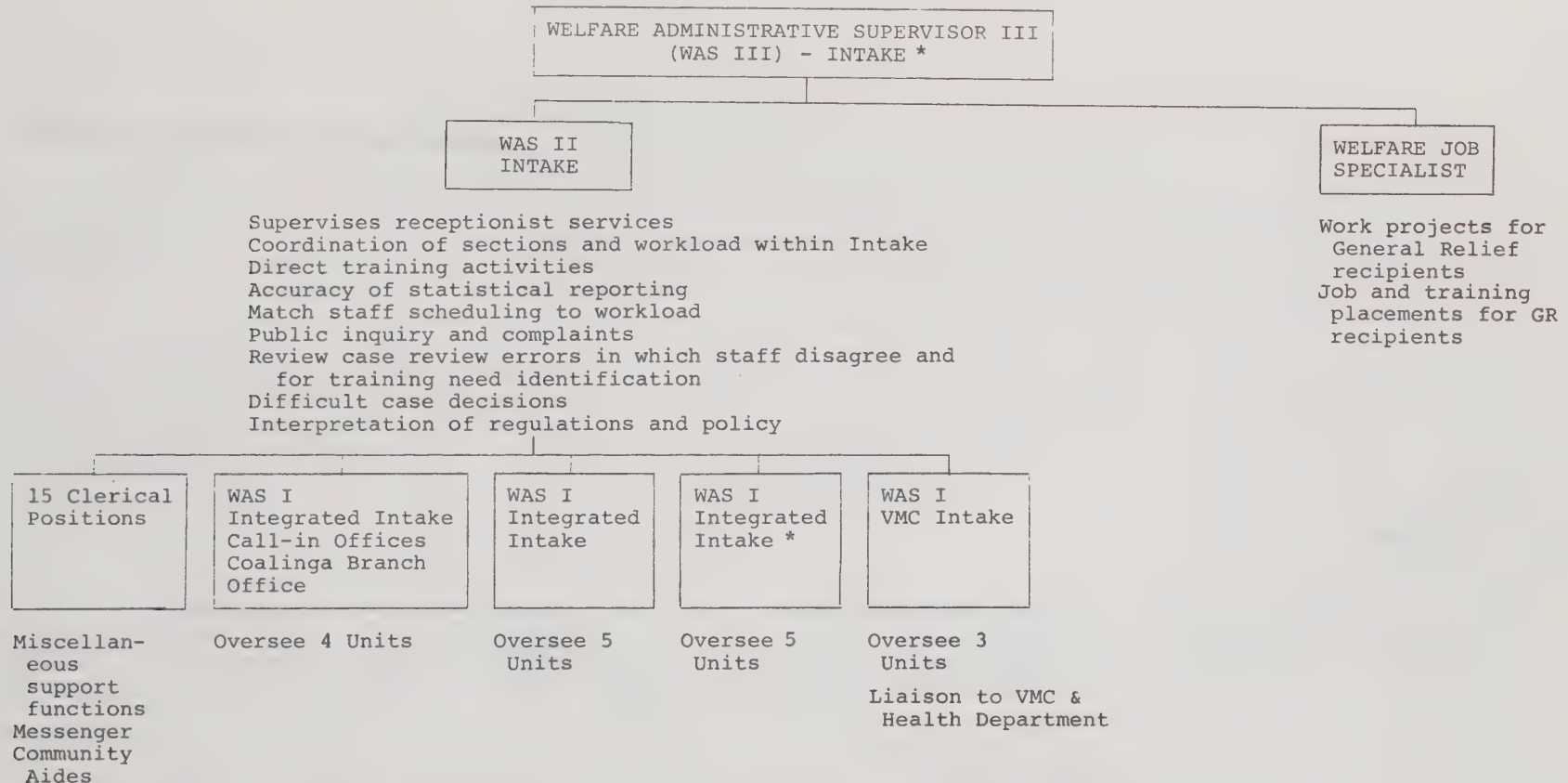
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE EXISTING ORGANIZATION



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EXHIBIT I-E

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE EXISTING ORGANIZATION
ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT DIVISION - INTAKE SECTION



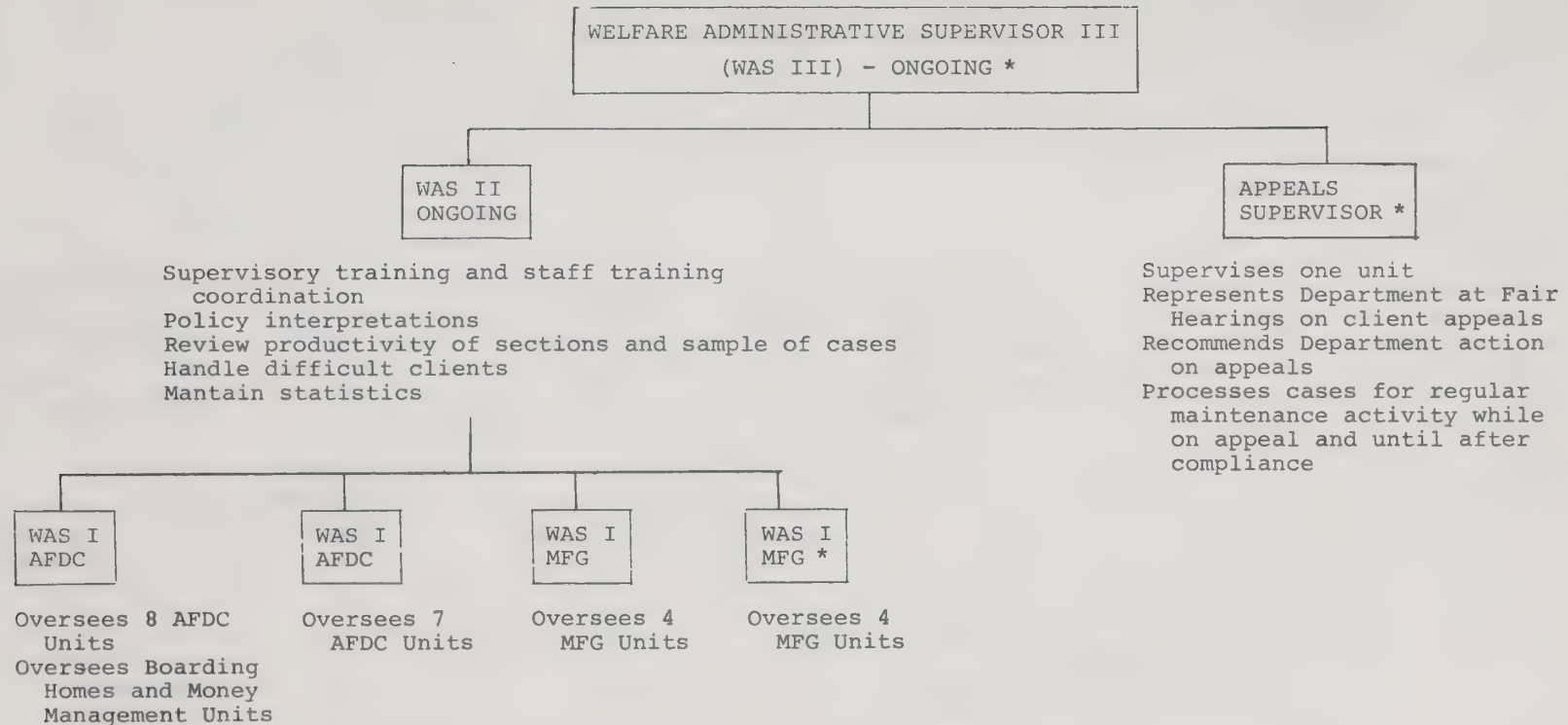
Duties common to the WAS I level in Intake are:

Train supervisors
Statistical reporting
Coordinate Intake training by determining needs and preparing lessons
Conduct training sessions
Policy interpretations
Complex case decisions
Public inquiry and complaints
Assist supervisors in reviewing cases
Review productivity of units
Review sample of cases for accuracy of policy and regulation execution
Handle difficult clients
Control overdue cases

EXHIBIT I-F

EXISTING ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT DIVISION ORGANIZATION

ONGOING SECTION



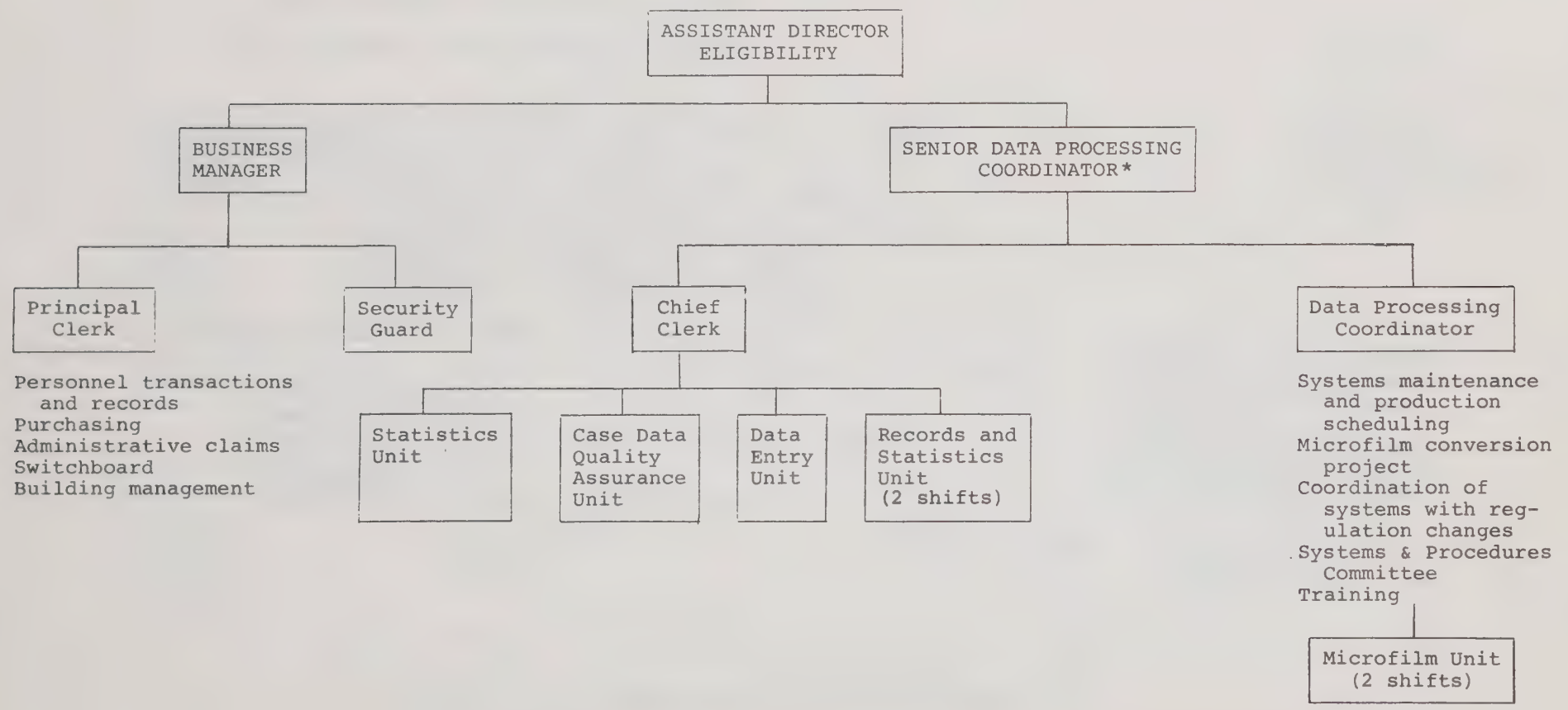
Duties common to WAS I level in Ongoing are:

Study regulations and procedure changes
Plan and prepare training
Conduct training
Complex case decisions
Public inquiries and complaints
Review cases for errors
Regulation interpretation
Supervise Community Aides (interpreters),
clerks and receptionists

EXHIBIT I-G

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE EXISTING ORGANIZATION

BUSINESS AND FISCAL SERVICES DIVISION



*Deleted in Proposed Reorganization

EXHIBIT II-A

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ORGANIZATION CHANGES

(See Exhibits II-B through II-E for a graphic display of the proposed organization)

The Assistant Director of Eligibility would be relieved of responsibility for the Business and Fiscal Services Division by placing it under a new Assistant Director for Administration. The Assistant Director for Administration would also have responsibility for special administrative services which now report to the Director. This new management position is the only one recommended which is not offset by the deletion of another management level position. We feel this new Assistant Director is essential to equipping the Department to bring top management attention to problems in these functional areas.

As discussed in finding #6 on Written Communications, we would establish two program specialist positions. This would relieve line managers of substantial research and planning responsibilities in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division and increase the effectiveness of both line managers and staff support. In the Social Services Division, it would replace the Staff Development Supervisor and recognize other staff support functions now assigned to that position. The duties of both specialists would encompass the training programming responsibilities of their respective Divisions. The establishment of the Program Specialist in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division would also permit the deletion of the two Welfare Administrative Supervisor III (WAS III) positions, one of which would offset the addition of the Program Specialist in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division.

The span of control of WAS I administrators in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division would be broadened by reducing their numbers from four to three in both the Intake and Ongoing Sections. This will permit the relocation of this level of management staff to the Social Services Division where middle management staffing needs to be strengthened to allow greater coordination with community social services for more effective service delivery.

To further enhance social services, responsibilities would be shifted among the two third level supervisors of the Division. Children's Services would no longer be the principal domain of the Child Welfare Supervisor, so the reorganization calls for its replacement with the standard WAS II classification now utilized for the other third level manager. The

two new WAS I positions in the Social Services Division would both report to the established WAS II because of expanded line responsibilities for that position. The new WAS II will have fewer line responsibilities than the existing Child Welfare Supervisor so that additional effort may be expended by this manager in community resource development and social service planning.

Within the new Administration Division, which is primarily an aggregate of existing functions, several changes are proposed within its organizational subunits. An Information Systems Manager would have responsibility for this technical management specialty within the Department. This position would not only coordinate data processing technical support and production personnel for the Department's extensive existing systems, but would have overall responsibility for seeing that information systems meet the operating and management needs of the three divisions of the Department. This position would be offset by the deletion of the Senior Data Processing Coordinator.

The Data Processing Coordinator would be relieved of line responsibilities by placing the Microfilm Unit under the Chief Clerk. This would permit the Data Processing Coordinator to concentrate on important data processing system maintenance and development responsibilities with minimal operational distractions.

The Business Manager would have most administrative support functions consolidated under his direction including most financial and statistical information generation units that produce the information he needs to fulfill his responsibilities.

A major change is the consolidation of all program audit functions under a new WAS I for Case Review and Appeals. This position is offset by the deletion of a Case Review and Appeals Supervisor. It would establish a management position to coordinate most program review activities. The Appeals Unit would be relocated from the Eligibility and Grant Services Division to the Administration Division where it would become part of an overall program evaluation feedback loop to the Director under this new WAS I. The Appeals Unit would no longer carry case administration responsibility as discussed in finding #31 on Client Appeals to the State Department of Benefit Payments. Therefore, the duties of the existing Case Review and Appeals Supervisor over the Appeals Unit would be changed. The reorganization contemplates an effect on classification by deleting the existing supervisor and replacing it with a new Appeals Supervisor with more specialized responsibilities.

The existing Case Review Unit would also report to this WAS I, and be supervised by a new Eligibility Supervisor position in

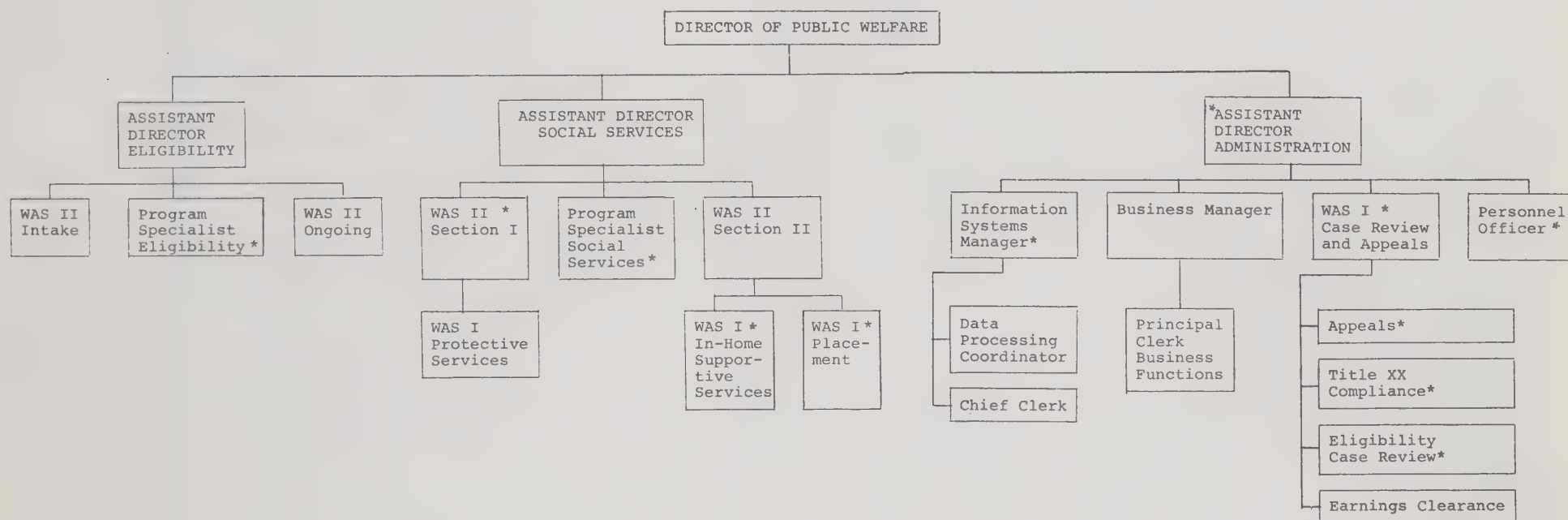
effect transferred from the Ongoing Section of the Eligibility and Grant Services Division. The need for clearer specification of Case Review supervisory responsibility is discussed in finding #7 on Supervision in the Case Review Unit.

To round out program review functions, the plan would establish a Social Services reviewer to monitor agency compliance with the program plan developed annually under Title XX of the Social Security Act. This would extend case review into the Social Services Division and provide independent feedback to the Director. This position would be offset by the deletion of a Professional Staff Development Technician whose duties are incorporated in the new Program Specialist positions and by the distribution of training delivery responsibility to first line supervisors and middle managers. This concept is discussed in finding #52 on the Training Assistant and Professional Staff Development Technician.

The plan also calls for the establishment of a Personnel Officer to assist the Director, line administrators and supervisors in conducting personnel management practices appropriately and consistently. The position would have responsibility for reviewing disciplinary actions, recommending and codifying personnel directives for the Department, coordinating with the County Employee Relations Officer, and have responsibility for overall recruitment and other personnel activity coordination with the Personnel Management Division. The need for such a staff position is based upon the findings in Section III on Personnel Practices. This position is offset by the deletion of a WAS III in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division.

EXHIBIT II-B

PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE ORGANIZATION



See Exhibit II-C for
Functions and Subordinate
Levels

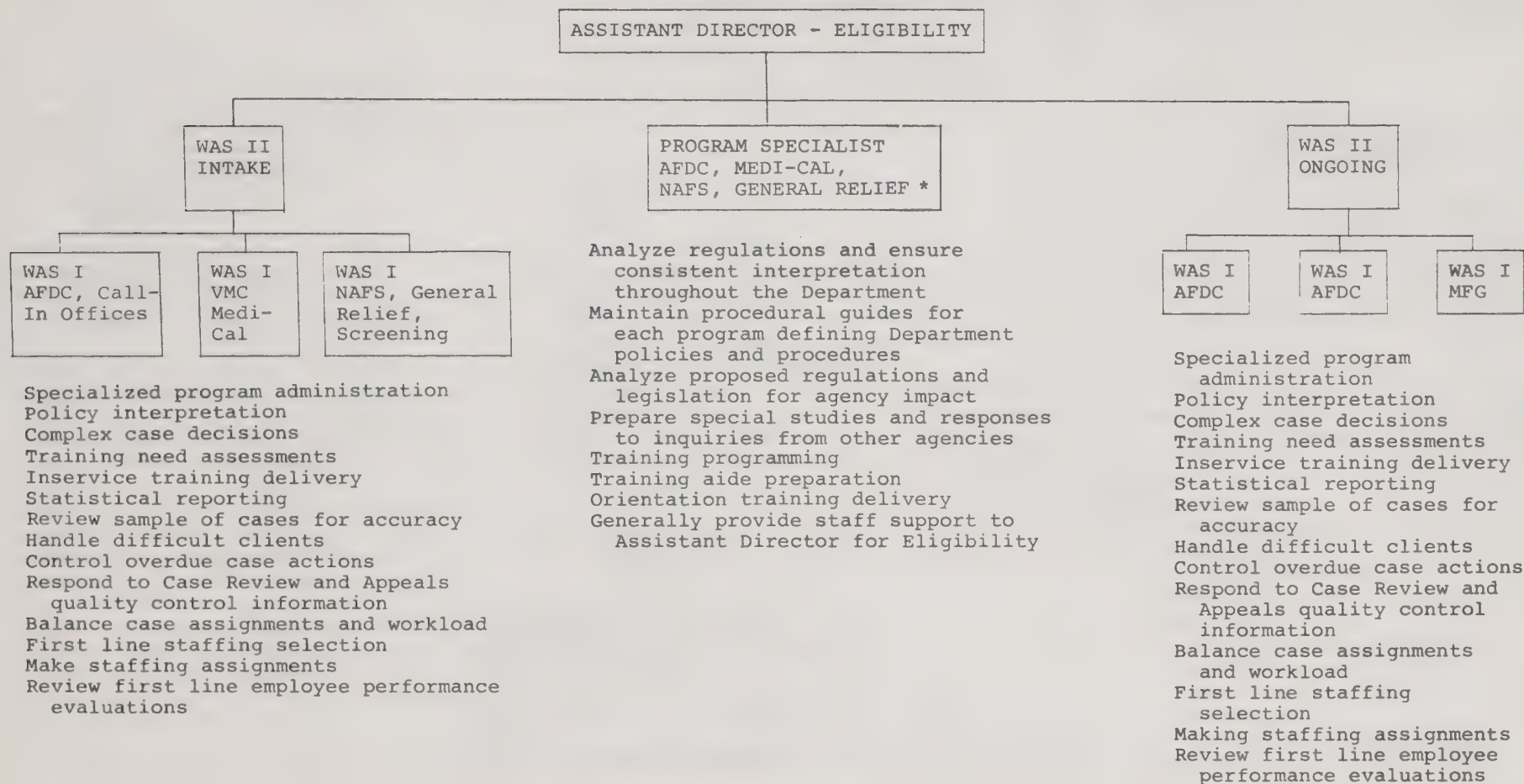
See Exhibit II-D for
Functions and Subordinate
Levels

See Exhibit II-E for
Functions and Subordinate
Levels

*Indicates a New Position

EXHIBIT II-C

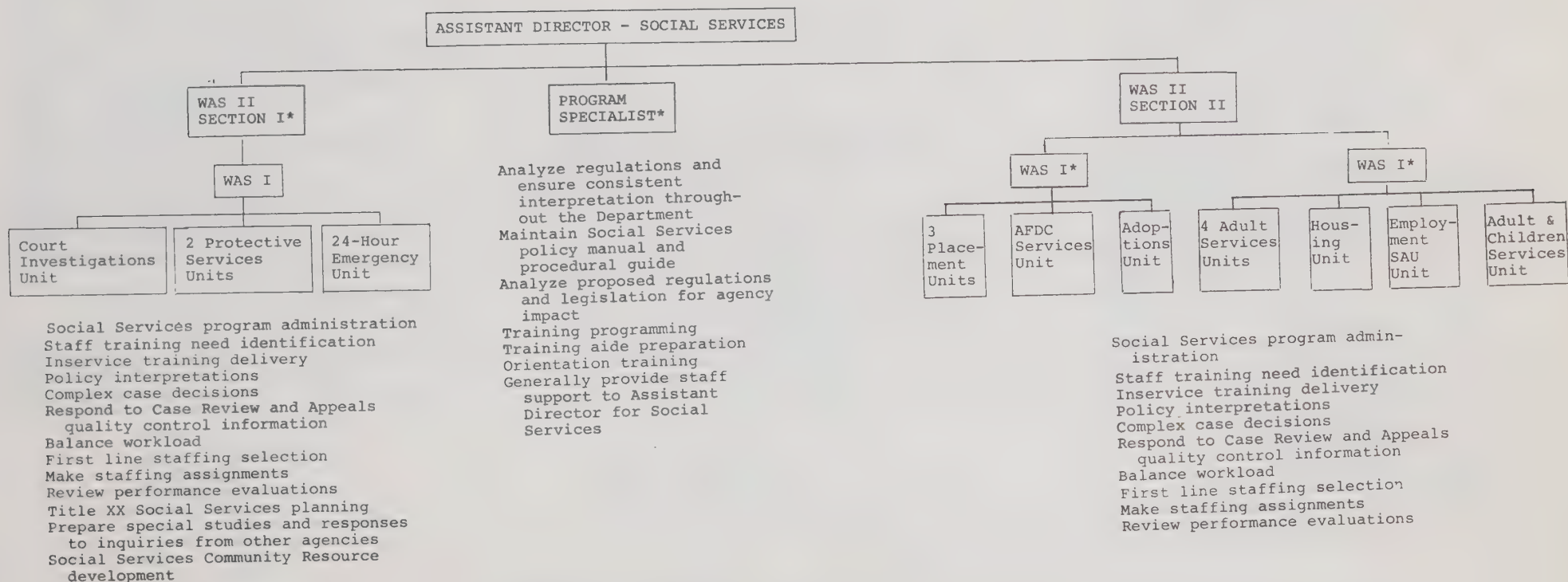
PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE ORGANIZATION ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT SERVICES DIVISION



*Indicates a New Position

EXHIBIT II-D

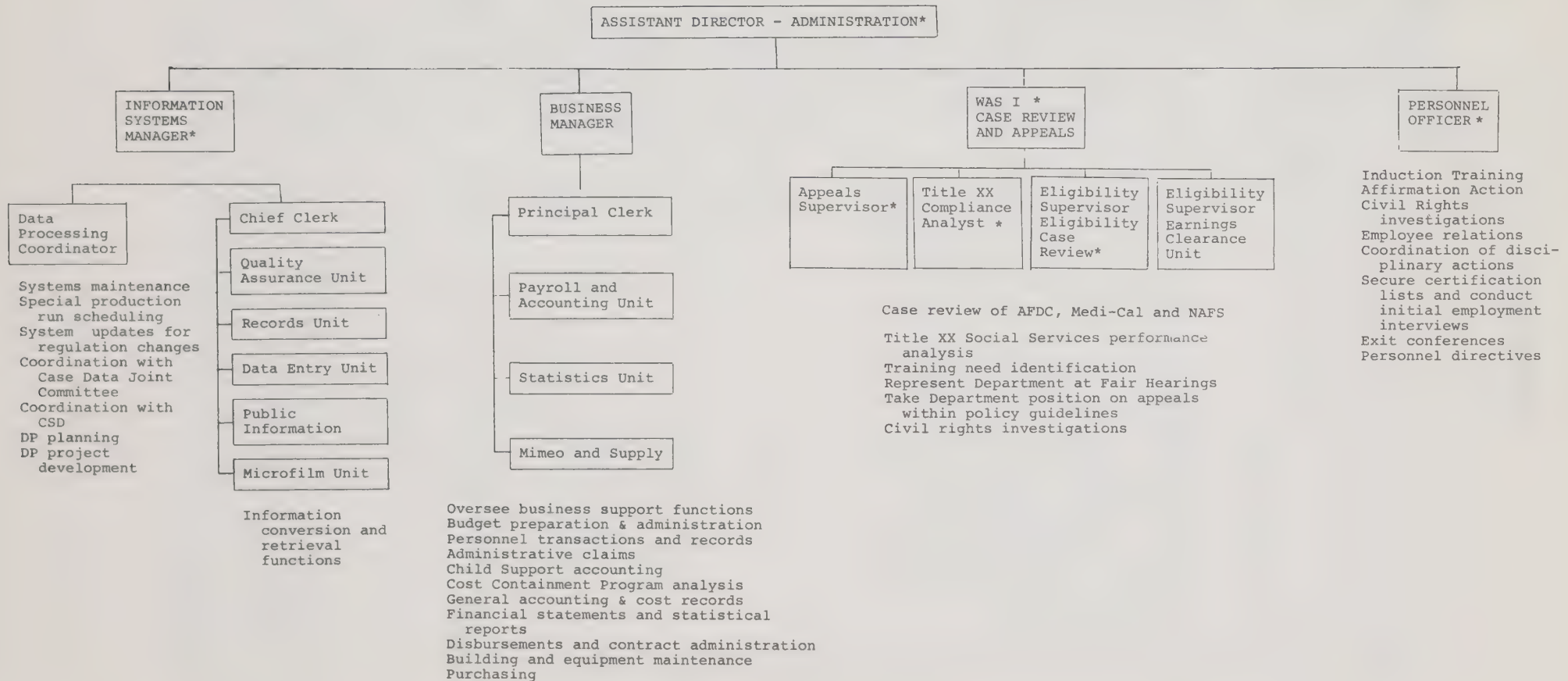
PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE ORGANIZATION
SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION



*Indicates a New Position

EXHIBIT II-E

PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE ORGANIZATION
ADMINISTRATION DIVISION



*Indicates a New Position

EXHIBIT III

POSITION ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

<u>ADDITIONS</u>	<u>DELETIONS</u>
1. Assistant Director, Administration	1. None
2. Welfare Administrative Supervisor II (Social Services)	2. Child Welfare Supervisor
3. Program Specialist (Eligibility)	3. WAS III (Intake)
4. Program Specialist (Social Services)	4. Staff Development Supervisor
5. WAS I (Social Services)	5. WAS I (Intake)
6. WAS I (Social Services)	6. WAS I (Ongoing)
7. WAS I (Case Review and Appeals)	7. Case Review and Appeals Supervisor
8. Appeals Supervisor	8. Case Review and Appeals Supervisor
9. Personnel Officer	9. WAS III (Ongoing)
10. Compliance Analyst (Social Services)	10. Professional Staff Development Technician
11. Eligibility Supervisor (Case Review)	11. Eligibility Supervisor (Ongoing)
12. Information Systems Manager	12. Senior Data Processing Coordinator

Net increase of one position.

All position additions are subject to classification review by the Personnel Management Division. Since many proposed additions are not yet established in the County classification plan, precise cost implications of these changes cannot be determined. However, we anticipate there will be no net increase in costs due to this position reorganization except for the additional Assistant Director position which will be 75% revenue offset.

2. INTEGRATED INTAKE

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Case Review finds too many errors in new Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cases coming from Intake (Case Review does not routinely analyze Foodstamp, Medi-Cal, General Relief, or Social Services cases).

FINDING SUMMARY

The judgment as to what constitutes "too many" errors is a subjective one. While the percentage of errors in AFDC Ongoing is high (up to 33% in the quarter ending June 30, 1977), they are not of a type that often result in grant or eligibility errors as identified by State Quality Control audits. However, the study team feels AFDC error rates in Integrated Intake are excessive compared to AFDC Ongoing (ranging from 21% to 29% in the quarter ending June 30, 1977) considering only the experienced level Eligibility Workers are utilized in Intake. A special study last year showed Integrated Intake performed similarly with Medi-Cal cases. Intake should be reorganized to improve the quality and productivity of its work.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Description of Integrated Intake

The term "integrated" is used to describe the Intake organization both because the function is now substantially consolidated into the facility at 4468 E. Kings Canyon Road (except call-in offices, the Coalinga branch office, and Valley Medical Center) and because most Eligibility Workers process any kind of aid application so that applicants do not have to be shuffled from one worker to another or from one office to another, to be able to file an applications for the program(s) in which they are interested. This is a distinct advantage to the client in terms of responsiveness of service because a single Eligibility Worker can provide counsel to the applicant as to what program or combination of programs for which the person is probably eligible, and explain the benefits and features of each.

The Integrated Intake Section consists of 17 units, each with an Eligibility Supervisor and approximately six Eligibility Workers III, except at Valley Medical Center where Eligibility Workers II are utilized and specialize in Medi-Cal.

Each Integrated Intake worker is responsible for a combined caseload (all programs) of approximately 30 cases per month. This is a combination of new cases assigned during the month and pending cases from the previous month. An interval of 30 days has been established for case action to avoid exceeding the State regulation deadline of 45 days for new AFDC applications.

Within the last few months, Integrated Intake has begun experimenting with a screening process which permits the potential client to find out quickly if there are any programs for which he might be eligible, and for which he may wish to apply. If the person chooses to apply, he is given the proper forms to complete and given an appointment to return later for the Intake application interview unless he has an immediate aid need. This process is reducing applicant waiting time, but ensuring that a second trip to the Welfare Department will be necessary.

Intake Eligibility Workers are expected to be able to work independently of close supervision, to be knowledgeable about all the welfare programs, conduct interviews in a business-like manner and accurately process applications.

Incidence of Errors in Intake

Finding #29 on Discrepancies in State and County Error Rate Calculations shows the history of errors in AFDC cases detected by the Department's Case Review Unit in the past year. Error rates in Intake are often nearly as high as those found in AFDC Ongoing. That finding also discusses the nature of the Case Review process which tends to inflate error rates because they count procedural errors which might result in grant or eligibility errors, but not necessarily proven errors as are reflected in the State's Quality Control audits.

Several factors would suggest that Intake AFDC errors should be substantially less than Ongoing AFDC errors. In Intake, almost all Eligibility Workers are of the most experienced level, Eligibility Workers III, or are Eligibility Workers II pending eminent promotion to Eligibility Workers III. Ongoing, as discussed in finding #20 on Personnel Turnover, operates with new Eligibility Workers I and Eligibility Workers II with an average of one year's experience. Intake operates with substantially more personnel stability below the Eligibility Supervisor level than Ongoing because employees must transfer to Intake to promote to Eligibility Worker III. No Eligibility Workers III are assigned to Ongoing, so the latter becomes a training assignment for Intake.

Case Review only checks AFDC applications after both the Eligibility Worker III and unit supervisor review the case for conformance to welfare regulations. Worker errors detected

by the unit supervisor are noted and discussed with the worker. The accuracy of applications completed by each unit depends upon knowledge and diligence of the workers and the unit supervisor. In Ongoing, supervisor review is much less than universal, especially for the periodic review process, before Case Review reads a case. Intake, therefore, has a greater opportunity than Ongoing to catch and correct its errors before Case Review sees the case.

The only factor that would tend to generate a higher error rate for Intake cases is that Case Review utilizes a lengthy checklist to give those cases closer scrutiny than is applied to Ongoing cases.

We surveyed eight counties of similar caseload size to Fresno to determine whether they had internal case review type programs and whether their error rate experience was comparable to Fresno. Only three had programs which appeared to correct procedural errors in addition to grant and eligibility errors as defined by State Quality Control. The other counties had a program similar or identical to State Quality Control. Since Case Review is a function which is not standardized among the counties, the definitions of errors vary and no comparisons can be drawn from other County experiences to determine whether Intake error rates in Fresno are typical for this operation.

Eligibility Supervisors and Eligibility Workers we interviewed attributed the incidence of errors to several factors:

- Heavy workload.
- Working conditions, especially during hot weather.
- Employee ability - supervisor or worker.
- Employee experience. Workers are transferred from Ongoing to fill Intake vacancies and usually have experience in only one aid program: AFDC, Medi-Cal, or Foodstamps.
- Infrequent processing of particular types of cases.
- The diversity of the cases assigned; constantly switching from one type of case to another.
- Having insufficient "quiet time" to process cases without interruptions for more interviews, etc.

The statistics from the Case Review Section were reviewed for the months of March, April, May and June, 1977, to assist in determining the extent of the error problem in the Intake Section. During the four month period, a monthly average of 69.2% of the Eligibility Workers had errors in AFDC cases.

These were errors that still existed after being reviewed by the unit Eligibility Supervisor. Only three Eligibility Workers produced error free cases as determined by the Case Review Section throughout the four month period.

When the units are compared, many have substantially fewer errors than others (see finding #3 on First Line Supervisory and Middle Management Effectiveness). State Quality Control audits are made on established aided cases only, and the accuracy of Intake processing has limited effect on the Fresno Welfare Department error rate except among cases audited immediately after application (relatively few).

Case Review findings indicate errors being made are elementary and repetitive. They indicate frequent and recurring oversights by Intake workers, frequently of a type that could only reach this stage of review if the supervisor has not made a review of the case first.

As discussed in finding #27, Worker Caseloads Comparisons with Other Counties, Intake spends considerably more time per case than the statewide average, while Ongoing produces substantially higher than other counties of the State.

Restricting recruitment of Eligibility Workers for Intake to transfer from Ongoing concentrates experienced personnel in Intake, and new employees in Ongoing. This doubles the effects of turnover on Ongoing (transfers out as well as terminations).

Case Review does not routinely screen Medi-Cal, Foodstamp, or General Relief (MFG) cases from Intake before their transfer to MFG Ongoing. The State has declined to participate in the administrative costs of case review of these programs, and there is no County participation in the aid costs for Medi-Cal and Foodstamps, nor sanctions for administrative errors.

The arrangement of having Intake Eligibility Workers capable of taking applications in virtually any aid program gives the Department considerable flexibility to shift staffing whenever application workload shifts daily and seasonally from one program to another. However, Eligibility Workers I and II cross training in two programs can accomplish sufficient staff assignment flexibility in a specialized Intake program.

CRITERIA

Intake applications should be virtually error-free by the time they reach Case Review, or relatively close to the lowest error rate among the Intake units (12% was lowest for June, 1977).

Eligibility Supervisors should thoroughly review each case submitted to them from their unit personnel in a timely manner.

The Intake process should be organized to provide a high level of responsiveness to applicants, in terms of addressing their needs and minimizing the time they spend waiting and interviewing. It should also promote efficient processing of applications.

EFFECT

Errors were detected in cases from all Intake units that were reviewed by the Case Review Section.

The combined unit average of errors detected was computed for the months of March, April and May, 1977. The monthly average was 8.6 AFDC errors for each of the 16 units. The unit average ranged from one error to a high of 16 errors per month. Nine units were under, and seven exceeded the 8.6 errors per month. The following is a comparison by units.

<u>ERRORS:</u>	1 to 4	5 to 8	8 to 12	13 to 16
<u>UNITS:</u>	2	7	4	3

Clients are served by a single worker and do not have to repeat the waiting and interview process when they are potentially eligible for multiple programs (primarily the "working poor"). Due to worker or supervisor error, some clients still experience up to three hours of waiting time for an initial interview on busy days, and must usually make a repeat visit to bring in necessary documents to verify eligibility.

Costs of processing AFDC applications in Fresno County appear to be above the statewide experience.

CAUSE

Written case management procedures for preparing applications are incomplete and workers forget aspects of proper procedures as they process applications from program to program. Many workers find it difficult to organize their work to complete it quickly and accurately.

Some unit supervisors are more adept or motivated than others in detecting and having workers correct errors.

The concentration of higher salaried Eligibility Workers in Intake tends to drive Fresno County Intake administrative

costs above statewide averages (see Table III of finding #24, Clerical Staff Support).

Requiring nearly all Intake workers to be proficient in taking applications in all programs does not appear realistic for a large number of staff. Small details for each of the programs make big differences in whether the case is processed accurately, and it is difficult for workers to keep aware of them all and keep them sorted out.

It is difficult for workers transferred from MFG without AFDC experience to adapt to Intake because of program complexities and verification requirements.

Concentration of Eligibility Workers III in Intake denies Ongoing of their experience where workload is also demanding due to more frequent deadlines, higher caseload volume, greater dollar impact of decisions, and continuous activity.

A persistent weakness in client service that Integrated Intake has not minimized is the number of times applicants have to come back to the office to meet with their worker. Waiting time would be a secondary inconvenience to the applicant if the process were organized to process their application more smoothly in fewer, shorter contacts. Integrated Intake is not necessary to accomplish this, and is less efficient than specialization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Specialization should be introduced to "case processing" in Intake, utilizing Eligibility Workers I and II to work on a single program such as AFDC, or Medi-Cal. Eligibility Workers III could be used as screeners to determine client referral to the appropriate program type of "case processor". In this way, client service objectives will be protected and efficiency and accuracy enhanced.
5. Already prepared guidelines for organizing the Intake application assignment and checklists for application completion should be required to be utilized. This should promote efficient processing and minimize omissions.
6. Rotation of application taking assignments should ensure that workers have sufficient time for processing applications with few interruptions.
7. Training sessions should be developed for Eligibility Supervisors on how to detect and prevent eligibility errors, and they should be held accountable for unit performance.

SECTION II - SUPERVISORY EFFECTIVENESS

3. FIRST LINE SUPERVISORY AND MIDDLE MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Supervisory personnel have little training in personnel management, and do not handle personnel problems well.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Welfare Department has had mixed success in developing a first line supervisory and middle management staff skilled in effective management techniques.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

During the course of this study the team has received persistent reports from line Social Workers and Eligibility Workers indicating many supervisors and middle managers are ineffective administrators. Common examples of complaints have been supervisor failure to give direction and training to new workers; limited accessibility to their subordinates for purposes of asking questions; waivering in the consistency of their application of eligibility regulations in the face of client pressure; making arbitrary decisions without adequate knowledge of a situation; failure to explain the reasons for a decision or the purposes (objectives) of an order; punitive personnel practices; failure to support the decisions of line personnel when established policies upon which they were based are challenged; favoritism to selected subordinates reflected in vacation scheduling and social interaction; reprimanding employees in front of others; and failure to adequately deal with low productivity or errors among some subordinates. These observations have been too numerous and widespread to be dismissed as only personality clashes or perception errors.

A common supervisory and middle management approach in the Welfare Department to disciplinary matters appears to depend upon the anticipated reaction of the subordinate. If the employee is not likely to complain about an evaluation, reprimand, etc., the Department will often sidestep the underlying issue and transfer the employee to another unit.

When the employee has been outspoken or strongly defensive in the past, the Department prepares to take a more direct action in anticipation of rebuttal and meet the underlying problem head on. Management should take the initiative to deal with its employees based upon the measures necessary to correct a problem; not react to problems when they cannot be avoided. This situation sustains rumors of favoritism and permits marginal performance to continue.

We note that upon separation of eligibility and services functions several years ago, a number of new supervisory slots were created and some in eligibility were filled with clerical personnel who had no supervisory experience. However, records indicate almost all supervisors and middle managers have since obtained some inservice supervisory training.

The responsibilities of supervisory and middle management staff, like line personnel, are not clearly spelled out except in classification specifications. This absence of standards and expectations is more serious with supervisors and middle managers than with line personnel where regulations, regular routines and forms permit the development of some intuitive consensus among workers and supervisors of job expectations. This is not nearly so clear in supervisory and middle management jobs.

Nevertheless, we found considerable welfare knowledge and expertise among top administrators. They have demonstrated rational and purposeful decision making. However, we found them making personnel and case decisions such as employee evaluation reviews and intervention in eligibility decisions on a case rather than policy basis, that appear to be more appropriately handled at lower levels. For instance, adverse Fair Hearing decisions are reviewed at a high level where a summary report of policy issues would be equally effective and less time consuming for top management. This reluctance to delegate, at least to some middle managers, is another symptom of possibly marginal supervisor and middle manager performance. It may also reflect a management style that does not trust subordinate judgment, and the resulting lack of delegation may be depriving middle managers of the experience they need to develop their decision making skills.

Many middle managers are permitted to pass complex case decisions up the line when department policy is not really at issue. Many such managers are not sufficiently familiar with the regulations they are supposed to administer. They are not being held accountable for their performance and that of their subordinates.

In examining unit error rates compiled by Case Review, we learned that many units are very effective in producing error free cases while others have considerable problems. In Intake for the month of June, unit production of Aid to Families with

Dependent Children (AFDC) cases in error ranged from 12% to 53%, with a median of 28.33%. Of 16 units producing AFDC cases, under three Welfare Administrative Supervisors I (WAS I), the first quartile ranged from 12% to 17%; second quartile 17% to 28%; third quartile 33% to 37%; and fourth quartile 37% to 53%. One WAS I had three units in the first quartile, one in the second and two in the third. Another WAS I had two units in the second quartile, one in the third and two in the fourth. The third WAS I had one unit in the first quartile, one in the second, one in the third and two in the fourth.

In Ongoing, unit errors among renewal AFDC cases ranged from 3% to 53%, with a median of 28%. Four units fell within the first quartile range with error rates of 3% to 17%; second quartile 20% to 25%; third quartile 28% to 29%; fourth quartile 31% to 53%. Both WAS I administrators had two units in the first quartile; both had two in the second quartile; one had three in the third quartile and the other, one; and all four units in the fourth quartile (highest error rate) were assigned to one WAS I (this WAS I has two more units than the other).

There is persistent, uneven responsiveness among supervisors to client complaints about their cases, from demonstrated concern and immediate attention to indifference. Higher management is aware of the individuals involved, but has not been effective in improving performance.

Evaluation of supervisors and middle managers appears based more upon the number of mistakes they make that come to the attention of higher management than upon positive accomplishments or broader, ongoing assessments. Criteria for supervisor and middle manager performance evaluations are not spelled out. This situation can result in supervisor and middle manager manipulation of impressions top managers form of subordinate personnel performance. This situation is accentuated by a prevailing top-down management style which accumulates little feedback or control information on performance of subordinate levels.

CRITERIA

Conscientious and skillful supervisors and middle managers are essential to the efficient conduct of business. This talent must be encouraged and developed continually with the guidance of top management and the assistance of a sound training program. Personnel management training is especially critical.

Job expectations for supervisors and middle managers should be clearly specified to promote good practices and facilitate evaluation. Each individual should be given a written explanation of job expectations in positive, goal-oriented

terms. Evaluations should assess goal attainment and set forth plans for further performance improvement.

Management should study the techniques of its more successful supervisors and middle managers and incorporate these traits in the job expectations and training of all personnel at equivalent levels.

Top management should concentrate on establishing department policy, and to develop subordinates who can be trusted to administer those policies with minimum direction. Top management is still responsible for subordinate judgment and performance. This performance should be monitored through control mechanisms such as information systems and organizational check and balance arrangements.

EFFECT

Morale of many workers is adversely affected when supervisors and middle managers do not deal with problems adequately. This results in lost respect for management and occasional confrontations with otherwise productive workers as well as underachievers.

Worker performance, at least in case work quality and perhaps productivity (see finding #27, Worker Caseloads Comparisons with Other Counties), varies substantially among Eligibility Worker units. This occurs both in Intake where all employees are experienced level workers, and in Ongoing where there is a preponderance of relatively new employees.

Top management is distracted from its responsibilities for planning, organizing and controlling the Department by having to deal with matters that it is reluctant to delegate to some middle managers.

CAUSE

Performance expectations for supervisors and middle managers are not well developed consistently throughout the Department. Consequently, there are few formal mechanisms for evaluating performance of these crucial employees, or detecting marginal or superior performance. Top administrators must rely on irregular feedback which is non-quantitative, hearsay, and/or is based upon subjective impressions which have been formed through information that has come through channels or from clients that are subject to manipulation or bias.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Superior and subordinate employees should reach a consensus of job expectations for the subordinate. These completed job expectations should be reviewed by the second level manager and modified if necessary.

9. Supervisors and middle managers should be evaluated periodically, perhaps quarterly, based upon these job expectation statements by the immediate next level manager. Management should utilize independent feedback information for these evaluations to the greatest extent possible, including:
 - 1) Evaluations of productivity.
 - 2) Evaluations of accuracy.
 - 3) Random review of case or other decisions.
 - 4) Examination of reports required of the subordinate or his staff.
 - 5) Follow-up on complaints by clients or staff.
 - 6) Review progress reports from the subordinate including projections and recommendations.
10. Develop a continuing management training program for supervisory and management level employees. The Department should take full advantage of the tuition reimbursement program, workshops and seminars, and inhouse training programs to meet the management training needs of its supervisory and middle management personnel.

DEPARTMENT COMMENT

Recommendations 8 and 9 have already been set in motion by requesting supervisors and management to develop performance expectations. During the next nine months this will be expanded to include all supervisory classifications.

Concerning recommendation 10, a management training program is being developed in cooperation with the Personnel Management Division Training Specialist. The Department will be scheduling management workshops for all administrative staff to assist in initiating management training.

4. SUPERVISORS OVERTURN ELIGIBILITY WORKERS' DECISIONS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Eligibility Workers have denied recipients' claims and their supervisors reversed the decisions.

FINDING SUMMARY

The information on the frequency of supervisors overturning eligibility decisions was not conclusive. It should also be noted that an important dimension of supervision is to review the work of subordinates to screen out errors of omission and commission and see that they are corrected.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

During interviews with Eligibility Workers, we discussed the question of whether unit supervisors have inappropriately reversed client eligibility decisions of Eligibility Workers. Most employees agree that this has happened in the past, but in most instances, they said it had happened to someone else or they were unable to cite specific cases we could evaluate. Those that we were able to track down were not conclusive because there were legitimate questions in those case circumstances as to how regulations should be applied.

When this issue was discussed with Eligibility Supervisors, they agreed that sometimes it is necessary to reverse an Eligibility Worker's decision. The supervisors stated that sometimes the worker feels that the client is not revealing all information and they deny aid. However, aid must be allowed if there is no contradictory evidence so the decision would be reversed. The workers say that it is embarrassing to tell a client, after they have denied aid, that he is in fact eligible.

The incidence of cases with unique or unusual circumstances may contribute to the need for supervisors to reverse Eligibility Workers' decisions.

CRITERIA

The Welfare Department should strive to clearly define rules of eligibility and train staff so that supervisors and Eligibility Workers are equipped to arrive at the same eligibility decision.

Supervisors and managers should not support or defend bad decisions of their subordinates. However, if they participated in a decision which is later determined incorrect, they should support their subordinates by taking responsibility for the error.

EFFECT

Eligibility Workers were concerned enough about the issue of lack of support from their supervisors to mention it during the interviews we conducted.

CAUSE

Data was insufficient to draw a conclusion.

RECOMMENDATION

11. The Director should issue a statement to staff on his policy of support for the actions and decisions of employees made in the course of performing their duties. It should address accountability, and distinguish between misconduct and genuine differences of professional judgment in applying departmental policies and program regulations to case management.

5. EFFECTIVENESS OF DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There is poor communication between management and line personnel. Communications are insufficiently specific and lack explanatory content. There are blocks to communications between and within divisions.

FINDING SUMMARY

There are regular meetings between administrative staff and line personnel where current information is conveyed to the staff.

It appears that reasons for decisions could more adequately be relayed to employees in order to encourage implementation of procedures, directives and case decisions.

Lateral communications between and within divisions are not prohibited, and are generally appropriately conducted between employees of the same or similar classifications.

There appears to be an over-reliance upon verbal communication to convey information through the organization.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Department regularly holds staff meetings. The first Tuesday of each month the Director meets with the administrative and supervisory staff. Information of a general nature is brought up as well as any inquiries that the staff may have.

The information is given verbally and is usually relayed verbally by those in attendance to their subordinates.

The second Tuesday of each month the Director meets with non-supervisory staff. This meeting is intended to give general information to employees, and to allow employees to express concern or ask questions about department policy or operations.

The remaining Tuesdays in each month are used for administrative staff meetings. These meetings are also used to verbally disperse information so that it may in turn be passed on, usually verbally, to subordinate personnel.

All of these meetings usually last one to two hours and start at 8:00 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. Formal agendas with explanatory information are not utilized at these meetings, but each participant is expected to take notes.

The administrative staff holds weekly meetings with their supervisory staff. Formal agendas are not used, but general information and procedural changes are conveyed verbally by reference to notes. The supervisory staff is expected to take notes on pertinent information. The supervisory staff then holds weekly meetings with Eligibility Workers and Social Workers. Communication is again mainly verbal with reference to notes.

Written correspondence from the administrative staff was reviewed. This included letters, directives and memoranda written within the last year. The written communications reviewed were generally written in an understandable and appropriate manner that readily conveyed the purpose of the correspondence.

In interviews with employees there was a general feeling expressed that certain characteristics were prevalent in the current pattern of communications of the Department:

- Information has a tendency to lose its meaning because of the manner in which it is verbally relayed from the top of the organization down to the supervisory and worker level. This process results in the information being abridged and interpreted several times to varying degrees among units.
- Communications between and within divisions is acceptable if it concerns clarification of a case or additional information is needed. Communication from one employee to another at a higher level in another division is infrequent.

- The communication process between administrative staff and workers is not as open and constructive as possible. A more positive approach is needed in responding to and eliciting information from staff in order to make the exchange of information as productive as possible.

CRITERIA

Regular staff meetings should be held to facilitate conveying information to employees; giving additional information on department activities and recent developments; and to allow employees to ask questions and voice concerns. Agendas with a basic outline of items to be discussed, including brief explanatory information, should be provided. This type of meeting should be conducted in a positive and open manner to encourage inquiries and attempt to present appropriate responses.

Lateral communications should be permitted for basic information gathering or case clarification purposes. However, more complex issues such as the determination of the appropriate disposition of cases, or questions on procedures, should be pursued upward through the organizational structure and then between divisions.

All communications, both verbal and written, should give adequate reasons or explanation for changes in policies, procedures or the disposition decision of cases. The explanation for decisions should include purpose and objective in order to promote and encourage employee understanding and accurate implementation.

EFFECT

Confusion results among employees because information is not uniformly communicated to lower levels of the Department.

CAUSE

The size of the Welfare Department (over 600 employees) makes communications to all of its employees a difficult task. The constant introduction of a high number of new employees into the Department (approximately 150 per year) also makes effective communications more difficult and important.

Communications, whether written or verbal, are subject to interpretation by each individual. There does appear to be an over-reliance on verbal rather than written communications which are more subject to modification in transmission from one person to another. Verbal instructions have to be repeated later for new employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Continue to utilize regular monthly and weekly meetings as a means of communication. An agenda with background information and space for notes should be utilized in order to increase uniformity of information.
13. Ensure that a positive and receptive attitude prevails at all staff meetings to encourage an open exchange of ideas, questions, and information.
14. Encourage administrative and supervisory staff to give explanations for decisions in a complete and positive manner designed to foster compliance with the decision by the affected employee, and to ensure the circumstances are properly narrated in the case.

DEPARTMENT COMMENT

Management training and other efforts during this year will be made towards facilitating the implementation of these recommendations. The Department has already asked that minutes of administrative staff meetings be taken and that these be shared with staff.

6. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Verbal instructions or interoffice memos are used to prescribe procedures without making them official instructions for uniform use. Regulations and policy memoranda are interpreted differently by supervisors and applied inconsistently.

FINDING SUMMARY

There appears to be an over-reliance upon verbal communication in interpreting and applying regulations and procedures. Administrative staff do not have sufficient secretarial assistance to help in preparing written communications.

Interpretation of regulations and policy memoranda may appear to vary when regulations are applied to cases within unique circumstances.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

In interviews with employees there was a general feeling expressed that decisions or directives on the proper interpretation of rules and regulations and the correct disposition of cases may vary considerably from case to case. This results in a lack of uniformity of procedures among work units in the processing of cases of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medi-Cal, Foodstamp, and General Relief programs. Currently, the Department utilizes 12 program regulation manuals of over 4400 pages which frequently are changed by State or Federal agencies as discussed in finding #43, Difficulties in Administering Welfare. Workers must rely on verbal interpretations or occasionally written memoranda from administrative personnel on individual cases in order to process more difficult cases. "Case Review Standards" which outline the required accuracy and completeness of cases, while limited only to AFDC, have proved very useful to workers in correctly and consistently interpreting regulations. Each unit also has a detailed procedural manual outlining departmental procedures necessary for compliance with welfare regulations.

The General Relief program, which is totally financed by the County, is administered under guidelines developed and interpreted by the Department. Since it is a County program, it is not subject to State or Federal audit. Concern has been indicated by employees that regulations are not always consistently interpreted for all clients who may be eligible under this program. We have not been able to pursue these concerns without compromising the confidentiality of employee interviews.

Administrative staff from the Welfare Administrative Supervisor I (WAS I) level through the Assistant Director do not have assigned secretarial help. Only the Director has a secretary. Many of the administrative staff spend considerable time performing clerical duties, such as typing and filing.

CRITERIA

Interpretive guidelines for regulations and department policies should be uniform throughout the Department and accessible to all workers.

Interpretation of regulations above the unit supervisor level and their application to particular cases should normally be in the form of a memorandum or directive. This directive should become part of the case narrative. This would ensure the consistent processing of cases and document the basis of case decisions by management personnel. Verbal communications are useful as long as important items are also explained in writing to promote understanding and uniform implementation.

Lower level intermediate administrators should make decisions based on established policy and only refer cases up the line that raise policy questions needing management resolution.

Administrative staff should have adequate clerical assistance.

EFFECT

Administration of benefits to clients under the AFDC, Medi-Cal, Foodstamp and General Relief programs is probably not performed in as consistent a manner as possible.

Differences in verbal interpretation of regulations and disposition of cases causes confusion and frustration among workers.

The effectiveness of top management personnel is hampered because they spend too much time performing clerical functions and interpreting regulations on a case by case rather than policy basis.

CAUSE

Too many eligibility case decisions are made above the unit supervisor level all the way to the Assistant Director level. This is a symptom of insufficient specification of department policy. The inadequate use of the Department procedural manual to promote consistency of interpretation of regulations, or inadequate explanations in the manual, result in an over-reliance on memory, written office memoranda of limited circulation, and otherwise unnecessary Welfare Administrative Supervisor and Assistant Director involvement in case decisions.

The Department has not felt additional secretarial help was necessary to assist the administrative staff. Top management responsibilities in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division, and to a lesser degree in the Social Services Division, include a heavy proportion of staff type responsibilities for line management personnel which detracts from the effective accomplishment of all management functions. These staff responsibilities include research to clarify regulations, review of individual case facts, and special projects such as updating the General Relief Manual.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. The Department should utilize and augment as necessary the Supervisor's Procedural Guide to promote consistency of interpretation of regulations.

16. Instruct administrative staff (WAS I and above) to utilize written memos or directives when they intervene to decide the disposition of cases.
17. Establish secretarial assistance for Welfare Administrative Supervisor and Assistant Director positions. The new Director indicates this may be accomplished by diverting personnel from the steno pool and reducing the amount of typing of narrative in social services cases.
18. Request the County Auditor-Controller to review the General Relief program during their next audit of the Department.
19. A financial aid program specialist position should be established to perform staff responsibilities to analyze legislation and regulations, and recommend the appropriate department policy of interpretation of regulations for use by line eligibility staff. This position should maintain a department policy manual of these interpretations, and assist in developing productivity standards and optimal case management procedure standards for line eligibility staff. We also recommend a specialist for the Social Services Division to perform similar tasks.

7. SUPERVISION IN THE CASE REVIEW UNIT

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The organization of the Case Review Unit is inappropriate because reviewers report to an equal grade Eligibility Worker rather than directly to the unit supervisor.

FINDING SUMMARY

The distribution of responsibilities between the unit supervisor and the Eligibility Worker III coordinator in the unit could be spelled out more carefully, though it has been substantially clarified by past practice. The Department should take steps to formalize this organizational arrangement or relieve the Case Review Supervisor of several peripheral assignments and permit him to resume all supervisory duties for Case Review.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Case Review Unit Supervisor has delegated considerable authority and assigned supervisory responsibility to an Eligibility Worker III in the unit who serves as a coordinator. Since most reviewers are also Eligibility Workers III, any exercise of authority over the other reviewers by the coordinator who is equivalent in rank has caused some friction in the past.

This delegation has apparently been made necessary by the numerous "special assignments" the former Welfare Director made to the Case Review Supervisor, and the readiness of the Case Review Supervisor to acquire additional responsibilities. These "special assignments" include liaison with State and Federal aid program auditors including State Quality Control analysts (and our County Administrative Office study team), chairman of the Forms Committee, chairman of the Corrective Actions Committee, chairman of the Eligibility Training Advisory Committee, preparing various reports for the State and Federal governments including surveys and studies, supervising the Earnings Clearance and Adult Aids Unit supervisor, supervising the Eligibility Worker training coordinator including the evaluation of training needs and changes to the Department "Procedural Guide", and reviewing cost control analyses. This diversity of assignments has had the positive effect of strengthening the Case Review Supervisor's perspective on recognizing the causes of errors, and has increased his effectiveness in dealing with other management personnel and workers to control errors.

The Eligibility Worker III coordinator assignment was established in February, 1975 and the current incumbent began in this capacity in May, 1975. He distributes renewal case reading assignments to reviewers, answers approximately 90% of policy and other questions the reviewers occasionally cannot resolve on their own, follows up with unit supervisors to resolve "disagrees" with Case Review error citations, conducts Case Review Unit meetings, and conducts error analysis research and cost containment analysis. On a day to day basis, this individual supervises assignments and the operating functions of the Case Review Unit, recommends policies and procedures for the unit, summarizes Case Review findings, discusses regulation changes with staff which they have read from circulated State regulations, etc., and is the unit's liaison to line administrators. He does not handle any personnel administration responsibilities such as granting time off, signing time cards, making post assignments, personnel selection, or evaluations, though he provides input to the Case Review Supervisor on these matters.

Case Review workers are carefully screened for proficiency and attitude so there are few sources of personnel problems with which to deal. They are expected to work independently

and accurately, so little supervision is required for work direction.

The Case Review Supervisor has not committed to writing his delegation of authority and assignment of responsibility to the coordinator. However, low unit turnover and the long standing use of this assignment has permitted a consensus of duties to develop to the satisfaction of all involved. The study team interviewed all case reviewers to obtain their opinions.

A classification study questionnaire and proposed duty statement were developed for an analyst-coordinator position in 1976 from within the unit. It was forwarded to the Case Review Supervisor who in turn discussed it with the Director. The Director rejected the proposal and did not forward it to the Personnel Management Division in possible violation of Section 3012 of the Personnel Rules. His purpose, according to the Case Review Supervisor, was to obtain further experience with the use of the position in that role. The incumbent did not press for relief as provided by Section 3012 of the Personnel Rules because he liked the analytical work and did not want to be reassigned.

CRITERIA

All newly created jobs which have possible budgetary consequences (new position or reassignment of an existing position from workload positions), and/or raise classification questions due to changes to the level of duties of the position, should be referred in a timely manner to the budget and personnel management staffs of the County Administrative Office for review. This may occur after the new position has been used on a trial basis, but should not be permitted to last for extended periods without appropriate clearances. To do otherwise is an inappropriate manipulation of the Department's line item-organizational budget authority and the civil service system classification plan.

As discussed in finding #3 on First Line Supervisory and Middle Management Effectiveness, the Case Review Supervisor should work with each of his subordinates, including the coordinator, to establish written job expectations for each individual.

EFFECT

The Case Review Unit has adjusted adequately to the establishment of a coordinator position though its introduction was not adequately prefaced with a written clarification of responsibilities. Some confusion persisted because reviewers had been told at the time of their recruitment they were to work

independently with little direction. To a considerable extent they do.

There is a possibility that an Eligibility Worker III position has been used out of class to establish a new position function which does not have organizational clearance from the County Administrative Office as provided by the County Charter, or budgetary approval of the Board of Supervisors. Nevertheless, there appears to be considerable justification for the assignment under the present distribution of duties to the Case Review Supervisor.

CAUSE

The former Director relied increasingly on the Case Review Supervisor over the years, as he did with several other key staff, for a wide range of duties not directly tied to the original mission of the position. This created a vacuum in operating the Case Review Unit at maximum effectiveness, which was filled by the coordinator in response to pressures from the State and Federal governments to reduce AFDC errors. The credit for the Department's dramatic drop in Quality Control errors since 1975 must in large measure go to the impact the Case Review Unit has made since it adjusted to its supervisor's growth in responsibilities by the expediency of assigning a workload position to a coordinator-analyst function over two years ago.

The former Director's refusal to support a reclassification study request in 1976 halted any progress to make the coordinator a legitimate supervisory or analyst assignment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. That the Director of Public Welfare re-examine the duties and authority of the Case Review Supervisor and the need for a position to perform review coordination, and clarify reporting relationships within the unit.
21. That the Director seek County Administrative Office approval of any organizational change he may wish to make as a result of his review.
22. That the Director seek a classification study of the coordinator Eligibility Worker III if the Department and County Administrative Office agree that the position should continue to have a substantial supervisory and/or analytical role.
23. The County Administrative Officer should propose changes to the Administrative Code which would specify the definition of organizational changes subject to his review, and the procedure departments are to follow to present their proposals in a timely fashion.

SECTION III - PERSONNEL PRACTICES

8. MANAGEMENT HARRASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Employees are placed on a blacklist for harrassement if they voice opinions questioning management policies or expressing job dissatisfaction.

FINDING SUMMARY

Some Welfare Department employees are reluctant to express opinions contrary to management's position or which question management policy. We found no evidence of a blacklist and discovered several employees who have criticized management constructively without subsequent harrassment.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

During the study, we interviewed line staff and management personnel about the existence of a blacklist and the harrassment of staff by management, but we did not discover any hard evidence of these practices.

We did talk with many employees who felt they had suffered unwarranted harrassment, but due to their request for confidentiality we were unable to directly obtain management's side of the story. We frequently determined from their description of the circumstances or personnel files that management may have had grounds for disciplinary action against some of these employees. Without the complete story, however, we cannot determine if management's response to provocations was appropriate, or even the existance and nature of the provocation in some instances.

In our discussions with management personnel, we were told of situations in which employees were argumentative, under-productive, or became disruptive influences within a unit. When disciplinary actions or reassignments were made as a response, this action may have been regarded by employees to be harrassment.

We have learned of instances where a manager/supervisor has come to distrust an employee, or dislike him/her because of a confrontation between the employee and management. Employees

interviewed, in commenting on this issue, felt that subsequent negative evaluations, reassignments, reprimands for heretofore ignored minor transgressions, continuous scrutiny or isolation were ways in which management expressed their displeasure with the employee.

Other department managers have exhibited substantially differing thresholds of tolerance for low subordinate performance before taking corrective action, if any.

Several former employees we interviewed may have resigned partially because their clash with a supervisor or manager appeared irreconcilable. These instances could be construed as harrassment, or on the other hand, as an informal means of encouraging a disruptive or under-productive employee to forfeit permanent civil service status through resignation rather than possibly undergo a difficult civil service appeal of discharge. We cannot distinguish unequivocally which situation is occurring because it is a question of the personal motive of the manager of which we have no knoweldge.

Most employees we interviewed agreed their reluctance to express disagreement with management decisions, question policies or make suggestions was based on hearsay from other employees rather than any personal experience with harrassment from management.

CRITERIA

Management should encourage two-way communication between line staff and management. Employees should have the assurance that no subtle acts of harrassment or other punitive measures will be taken because of expressing an opinion contrary to that of management. Employees must also be counseled to remain subordinate to their supervisors and established policies while they constructively attempt to persuade management to make changes.

Managers should deal with disruptive, obstructive, and/or under-productive employees forthrightly and pursue disciplinary action or termination proceedings as appropriate to the severity of the problem. The reasons for such action should be legitimate and able to stand up to scrutiny by a grievance committee or the Civil Service Commission.

Managers should not lose patience with employees who criticize policies or decisions in an unconstructive way. Reprimands are appropriate after the manager has reminded the employee of the need for tact and considerate behavior and he persists. An atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding is necessary for two-way communication, and managers bear the prime responsibility for establishing this environment.

EFFECT

There is considerable distrust of several Welfare Department middle managers among employees, most frequently by reputation rather than personal experience.

Some employees are reluctant to offer suggestions for improvements in procedures or policies for fear of annoying managers.

CAUSE

Welfare Department managers/supervisors have infrequently received refresher training on personnel management practices. They could be better equipped professionally and psychologically to deal with the critical employee.

Some supervisors and middle managers are often reluctant to take disciplinary action against their immediate subordinates, and this has brought about the intervention of high level managers to deal with personnel problems. This produces the appearance of unnecessary and unequal intervention by higher management in problems that should be resolved at a lower level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

24. The Department should use all available means such as conferences, seminars, special training sessions, and administrative meetings to improve communications and working relationships between management and line staff.
25. Immediate supervisors must be held accountable for dealing with personnel difficulties with their immediate subordinates. Higher level management should be limited to a review function, and the training and evaluation of the lower level supervisors.

9. EMPLOYEE KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Employees are not aware of employee rights and benefits such as the grievance procedure. They do not have an employee manual.

FINDING SUMMARY

Information concerning employee rights and benefits is distributed to employees during the first day of employment. All employees in bargaining units have been given a copy of their applicable memorandum of understanding which includes the grievance procedure. Each employee has a copy of the Department administrative directives outlining department and personnel policy. These directives constitute an employee manual and in several areas need updating. However, the directive on the Grievance Procedure is current (effective 1-1-73). A pamphlet outlining County employment rights and benefits has been distributed by the Personnel Management Division of the Administrative Officer to all County employees, including the Welfare Department.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

New employees receive information on County benefits during an orientation session conducted at the Department on their first day of employment by either a Welfare Administrative Supervisor or the Staff Development Supervisor. The following topics are explained during the two hour orientation:

- Health Insurance
- Sick leave, vacation, military leave, pregnancy and bereavement leave
- Tuition reimbursement
- Holidays
- Credit Union
- Disability Insurance Program
- Union Security - Union Representative explains role of union
- Coffee break

New employees also receive a copy of the memorandum of understanding.

In addition, employees receive information at the orientation session conducted for all new County employees by the Personnel Management Division. This also includes an explanation of health insurance, retirement benefits, and the issuance of an employee benefit and personnel reference desk calendar. The calendar is designed as a ready reference guide describing both employees' rights and benefits. It also shows where to seek additional information on equal employment opportunity, grievance process, appeal to disciplinary actions, employee organizations, salary and promotional benefits, transfers, probationary period and permanent status.

During July of 1976, all existing County employees represented within bargaining units received a copy of the applicable memorandum of understanding and the grievance procedure. During August, 1977, all existing County employees received a revised memorandum of understanding with reference to the

current grievance procedure and a plan for developing an improved procedure. Since August, however, new employees no longer automatically receive a copy of the grievance procedure since it is not included as an attachment to the memorandum of understanding. The reason the grievance procedure is not being distributed automatically is that the procedure is currently undergoing review and possible modification in the near future.

Each Welfare Department employee has a copy of the Department administrative directives. These directives cover broad department policy and personnel policies applicable to all employees. The Personnel Management Division of the Administrative Office has reviewed the directives on personnel issues for compliance with County policy and completeness, and we have forwarded the resulting findings to the Department for their consideration as they update the directives.

Many of these directives are in need of revision. Many changes in the Personnel Rules, Administrative Code, and Salary Resolution have occurred in the last 15 months, as a result of negotiations with the various bargaining units. For example, until June 3, 1977, Administrative Directive 1-A, Punctuality, stated:

"The lunch hour is from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. (unless specific approval is granted for alternate times."

Since many employees in the Welfare Department are on the 9/80 work schedule and have a one-half hour lunch period, the specific designation of 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. is incorrect.

Directive 1-J, County and Departmental Policies Regarding Participation in Educational Courses, indicates that requests for tuition reimbursement must be submitted within two weeks after the opening date of the course. This is now three weeks.

The Department has been informed of these needed revisions and is currently revising the directives. Normally, the Department reviews all directives annually at the beginning of the fiscal year and may make other revisions or issue new directives throughout the year as needed.

CRITERIA

Welfare Department administrative directives should be updated regularly and be kept consistent with County-wide policy.

Employees should be made aware of employee rights and benefits. They should have a reference document available describing Department personnel procedures, benefits and options, and showing where additional information may be found.

EFFECT

Conflicts between outdated directives and publications of the Personnel Management Division and other official County policy statements could cause confusion among employees.

CAUSE

Department administrative directives on personnel matters have not been kept current. No staff person has been designated by the Department as responsible for reviewing and updating the directives on a continuing basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

26. The Department should complete a review of the administrative directives and revise any outdated provisions.
27. The directives, particularly those based on the Administrative Code, Personnel Rules and Salary Resolution, should be carefully drafted and regularly updated throughout the year to ensure they are consistent with current County policy and procedures.
28. Each revision to the directives should be accompanied by a new table of contents or change sheet indicating the date of the current version of each directive. Each person assigned a set of directives should initial the change sheet when revisions are inserted. This will facilitate keeping all sets of directives current by identifying obsolete versions of directives.
29. The feasibility should be explored of utilizing an employee newsletter as a means of regularly distributing department information of a general interest to employees.

DEPARTMENT COMMENT

Current directives have been reviewed and revised. Some have been referred to County Counsel for legal interpretation.

Each employee should have a set of directives and efforts should be directed to ensuring that the employees keep them up to date.

10. USE OF CONFERENCE REPORTS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Conference reports are used to punish employees for questioning department policy or activity.

FINDING SUMMARY

Conference reports are used in a reasonable manner to officially note inadequate employee performance and encourage improvement. However, their use as an informal disciplinary tool is inconsistent with County policy.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Welfare Department Administrative Directive 1-C, Performance Evaluations, outlines the use of the conference report. The directive states in part.

"The conference report should be used only when a probationary or permanent employee is having serious difficulty performing one or more important aspects of the current job assignment. It is a formal notice that unless the difficulty can be corrected and overall performance is brought up to an acceptable level in a reasonable length of time, it will be impossible for the employee to continue to be employed in the current assignment."

"The conference report must contain:

1. The specific factor(s) of the employee's current job performance being performed at an unacceptable level.
2. The efforts made by the supervisor to help the employee bring job performance up to an acceptable level.
3. The exact expectations or objectives, both quantitative and qualitative, which the employee must attain in order to bring job performance up to an acceptable level.
4. The time period during which improvement in job performance must be accomplished."

"If two consecutive satisfactory performance evaluations are received, upon written request to the Director, the employee can have the conference report removed from his personnel file."

The conference report clearly falls within the definition of a written reprimand as provided in the Personnel Rules (Rule 10012).

Eighteen conference reports received by employees from 1973 to 1977 and still retained by the Department were reviewed by the study team. They were usually specific, outlining the problem areas and recommending improvement within a certain time. They appeared to comply with Department Administrative Directive 1-C.

Personnel Rule 9011 indicates that the County Administrative Office is responsible for maintaining a complete repository for all personnel records of employees. The rule provides in part that:

"A personnel jacket is also maintained for each classified and unclassified employee. All documents relating to each employee are filed therein. These include. . .disciplinary records."

A County Counsel opinion of October 20, 1977, also indicates that once an evaluation is placed in a personnel file it becomes a public record and must be retained until destroyed as authorized by law.

Copies of the 18 conference reports cited above are not on file in the employees' official personnel jacket maintained at the Personnel Management Division.

Conference reports on particular employees have been discussed openly in administrative staff meetings attended by Welfare Administrative Supervisor II level administrators and above.

CRITERIA

Department directives on disciplinary actions should conform to County Personnel Rules. A copy of each written disciplinary action should be retained in the employees' official personnel jacket at the Personnel Management Division. The effect of disciplinary actions included in the record may be neutralized by subsequent evaluations placed into the record by the Department if employee performance improves.

Conference reports or other forms of disciplinary action taken against employees should not be discussed or shared with persons not directly responsible for the organizational unit in which the subject employee is assigned.

EFFECT

The proper disposition of future disciplinary action against an employee could be unnecessarily jeopardized when the official personnel record fails to show a history of difficulty and/or the failure of lesser disciplinary measures to resolve employee performance problems.

The confidentiality of personnel records has been compromised by the discussion of conference reports with administrators who are not responsible for the employee's performance.

CAUSE

The Department has used the conference report as an informal lever to correct employee performance. Once the employee's performance was up to standard, the report was of minimal value and could possibly have a negative affect on the employee's morale and future performance. By failing to forward the conference report to the Personnel Management Division, the Department retained discretion to purge the personnel records when deemed advantageous.

RECOMMENDATIONS

30. Use the term "written reprimand" instead of "conference report" to conform with Personnel Rule 10012.
31. Ensure that copies of current and future written reprimands are sent to the Personnel Management Division to conform with Personnel Rule 9011, and that the reprimand is supplemented at a later time with a complimentary evaluation if the employee problem is corrected.
32. The confidentiality of personnel records should be protected by restricting the discussion and the availability of the information to parties who have a legitimate need to know its contents.

11. ANNUAL LEAVE TIME DURING PROBATIONARY PERIOD

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Employees may not use annual leave time during the six month probationary period.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Department permits employees to take leave time during the initial six month probationary period for emergency purposes, but usually denies requests for vacation purposes. The use of annual leave for vacation time during subsequent promotional probationary periods is usually approved.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The County Salary Resolution prescribes when employees are eligible for annual leave and who may approve such leave. Section 610.11 indicates that employees shall be eligible to use annual leave upon accrual. Section 610.611 indicates that all annual leave for vacation purposes shall be taken at such time or times during the calendar year as may be approved by the Department Head.

Section 610.2 shows that new employees, such as Eligibility Workers I, accrue 6.15 hours per pay period of annual leave, or approximately five days after three months employment, and 10 days after six months employment.

Section 610.73 indicates that payoff on accrued annual leave shall not be made to employees who terminate or are terminated during their initial probationary period or any extension thereof.

Welfare Department Administrative Directive 1-N, Absences from Employment, states basically the same leave policy. It also indicates that scheduling of vacations is primarily a supervisory responsibility with conflicts in vacation schedules in units, sections, or divisions being resolved by the Welfare Administrative Supervisor III.

Employees in entry level classes, such as Eligibility Worker I, are not normally granted vacation time if requested during their probationary period. However, the Department has granted the use of annual leave time for emergencies. Permanent employees on probation because of promotion to higher levels may take vacations during their probationary period.

CRITERIA

The approval of the use of annual leave time for vacation purposes should be at the discretion of the Department Head. The granting of the use of annual leave should: 1) be in conformance with the Salary Resolution; 2) be consistent with the Department's workload and the minimum need for coverage in work units; 3) consider any urgency in the employee's need

for the use of annual leave; and, 4) ensure that new employees are present a reasonable amount of time during their probationary periods.

EFFECT

Employees on their initial six month probationary period are generally not allowed to use annual leave for vacation purposes.

CAUSE

The Department has attempted to prevent probationary employees from using accrued leave prior to their terminating employment or being terminated. This was done to avoid their circumventing the Salary Resolution provision that they are not entitled to a payoff of accrued annual leave if terminated during their probationary period.

The Department feels that new employees on their initial six month probation should minimize absences from work (including the use of annual leave for vacation) during this time. Since this is a critical employee evaluation time, the Department feels maximum employee attendance is necessary to properly evaluate an employee. However, the accrued leave time available to new employees during their initial six month probationary period is minimal because of their short employment with the County. It does not appear that the employees' use of accrued leave time during the initial probation period would inhibit the Department's ability to properly evaluate an employee unless his performance is marginal and the maximum amount of work time is desirable to give the employee maximum opportunity to prove he is competent. The use of annual leave upon accrual should not be denied solely on the basis of probationary status.

RECOMMENDATION

33. The Department should evaluate and approve vacation leave requests from new employees on the same basis as other employees, such as consideration of workload and adequate coverage in work units and attendance at scheduled training, unless performance is marginal and termination is a possibility.

12. FLEXIBLE WORK WEEK AND TARDINESS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The flex schedule is not being administered fairly in granting prime days off when employee requests conflict. Tardiness has been used as grounds for revoking the flex week work schedule while more severe sanctions are applied to some, and no sanctions at all to others. There are no guidelines spelled out indicating proper sanctions for tardiness.

FINDING SUMMARY

Welfare administration removes employees from the flex work week privilege if they cannot abide by the flex schedule. The number of rule violations before action is taken has varied in each section of the Department. The Department is currently developing guidelines for dealing with tardiness.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The flexible work week is an option offered to the employees of the Welfare Department. The current flexible work week schedule is effective 7-8-77 through 1-6-78. This six month "block" is a change from the former flexible work week schedule which covered an eleven month period from 8-6-76 to 7-8-77. The operating procedures for both flexible work week periods were the result of meetings and agreement between employee organization representatives and Welfare Department management. The current department policy is in compliance with the union agreement and the union has not indicated dissatisfaction with the current administration of the flex week.

The former Welfare Director issued a memorandum on June 14, 1977 to all employees outlining the flex week options and procedures for participating and selecting days off. A "preference form - work hours" was attached to the memorandum. Each employee had a choice of selecting the regular work week or the flex work week, working hours, and one hour or half-hour lunch periods. A list of job classifications, primarily administrative staff, were excluded from working the flex week and these job titles were also listed in the memorandum.

In determining which employee will get a specific choice of day off when it cannot be granted to all who opt for it, the following applies: (Excerpt from Welfare Department memorandum.)

- "A. Any employee who had his first choice of day off on a Monday or Friday in the immediately preceding block of flex will yield to the other employee(s).
- B. If conflict still exists after eliminating persons in (A) above, the decision will be made on the basis of seniority in the Welfare Department (computed as specified in the Personnel Rules).
- C. An employee would not be required to give up his/her flex day unless that specific day was challenged as above."

The plan indicates, and management has exercised, its option to exlude or drop from the flex option employees abusing this privilege through excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or other abuses. Written notification was given to the employees excluded. Employees dropped are not permitted to participate in the balance of the flex week block, and are assigned an 8-hour a day schedule with a one hour lunch period.

Interviews with employees indicated that prime days off were being granted in accordance with department policy. However, two employees requested to be removed from the flex week because of frequent tardiness. One employee's request was approved and the other denied.

Determination of how many infractions constitute excessive absenteeism or tardiness is left to the discretion of management. Management discretion is not applied equally throughout the Department in revoking flex week.

Three hundred forty three (343) of the 540 employees eligible chose the flex work week during the August 6, 1976 to July 8, 1977 block period. During this same period, flex week options were revoked for eight employees. We do not have any record of disciplinary actions against employees not on flex, if any.

EMPLOYEES REMOVED FROM FLEX WORK WEEK

August 1976 - July 1977

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Assigned Section</u>	<u>Incidents Absenteeism-Tardiness</u>	<u>Time Span (Months)</u>	<u>Average Per Month</u>
1	Intake	54	12	4.5
2	"	19*	9*	2.1
3	"	14	12	1.2

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Assigned Section</u>	<u>Incidents Absenteeism-Tardiness</u>	<u>Time Span (Months)</u>	<u>Average Month</u>
4	"	6	3	2.0
5	On-Going	80*	9*	8.9
6	On-Going MFG	39*	9*	4.3
7	Record Room	25	4	6.2
8	Steno Pool	25*	9*	2.8

*Incidence of absenteeism and tardiness in 9 month period.

As shown above, each section used different criteria for invoking the sanction of removal from the flex week. Infractions ranged from 80 incidents of absenteeism and tardiness to 19 for the same period of time (9 months) before removal from the flex work week schedule.

From approximately April, 1977 through June, 1977, the Ongoing Section's policy on tardiness was to verbally counsel the tardy employee. However, during the same period, the Intake Section was requiring a verbal counseling for the first incidence of tardiness, a written counseling for the second incident, and docking for any subsequent tardiness. Docking is the reduction of an employee's normal work hours shown on a time card by the amount of time not worked due to tardiness, which results in reduced salary for that biweekly period.

Currently, all employees receive verbal warnings if tardy. There currently are no written guidelines describing degrees of tardiness and appropriate measures to be taken. Each employee is dealt with by management on an individual basis considering any extenuating circumstances.

The Personnel Rules (#10) prescribe the types of disciplinary actions available to the Department. These include an oral reprimand, written reprimand, disciplinary suspension, administrative salary reduction, disciplinary demotion and dismissal.

CRITERIA

Employees who choose to work the flex week should be assigned days off in accordance with the procedures outlined in the flex week memorandum.

Guidelines defining tardiness and describing consequences should be available to all employees. All employees should be treated equally in accordance with these guidelines.

EFFECT

Employee tardiness is not dealt with consistently and fairly and many employees may feel preferential treatment is extended to some employees.

The assignment of prime days off in the current flex block appears to be administered fairly.

CAUSE

There is presently no uniform policy for dealing with tardiness equally throughout the Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

34. Regardless whether disciplinary action is taken, employees should be docked for any unauthorized tardiness or absences from work in one-tenth of an hour increments beginning on the first day of such absence or tardiness. Disciplinary actions for excessive absenteeism and tardiness should be handled in the same manner as other infractions of Personnel Rules and procedures. The disciplinary actions outlined in Rule 10, Disciplinary Action, of the Personnel Rules, should be followed.
35. In order to monitor and ensure uniformity of disciplinary action for tardiness, a report should be sent at least monthly to the Director or a departmental Personnel Officer (see finding #1 on Organization) listing the names of employees absent or tardy without authorization, the amount of time, and the reason. This report could be prepared by the Senior Clerk under the Business Manager. The Personnel Officer should utilize the report to monitor disciplinary actions and ensure appropriate action is taken by management in a timely fashion which is fair to the employee and the County. Line supervisors and administrative staff at the Welfare Administrative Supervisor I level should still be responsible for dealing with tardiness on an individual and daily basis.
36. Persons not able to adjust to the flex week schedule should be removed and placed on a conventional five day, 40 hour week schedule. This should not be construed as a disciplinary measure.

13. SIGN-IN SHEETS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Sign-in sheets are awkward to use as a management control device and too much effort is expended reviewing them.

FINDING SUMMARY

Sign-in sheets provide minimal value as a management control device. Department management has reviewed the use of sign-in sheets and discontinued their use. The primary responsibility for enforcement of employee adherence to work schedules has been placed with first line supervisors.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Sign-in sheets used in the Welfare Department showed who was on duty each day, time of arrival and departure of each person, lunch time taken, absences and the reasons for absences.

According to Welfare Department Administrative Directive #17, Recording of Time, sign-in sheets were instituted in the Welfare Department in February, 1976, "as substantiation of overtime claims, to maintain a record of those persons on duty each day and to monitor adherence to the many optional flexible work week schedules allowed in the Welfare Department". The flex week system resulted in considerable employee movement because of varying working hours and differing days off.

Until April, 1977, all employees from the Welfare Administrative Supervisor I (WAS I) level and below were required to use the sign-in sheet. In April, 1977, the requirement was lifted from persons at the WAS I level. In July, 1977, the use of sign-in sheets was discontinued with the exception of a building sign-in sheet for after hours and weekend workers. First line supervisory personnel were given the primary responsibility for maintaining adequate records of attendance of their subordinate employees during normal business hours.

The usefulness of sign-in sheets as a control device was questionable since employees in many instances signed-in by themselves on an honor system and their exact time of arrival or departure could not be verified. Also, many employees, especially Social Workers, spend considerable unsupervised time outside the Department offices and frequently make field calls before reporting to work. A sign-in sheet did not truly monitor attendance for these employees.

Since the sign-in sheet system was discontinued in July, first line supervisors have primary responsibility for enforcement of employee adherence to work schedules. Supervisors keep notes, such as on a daily calendar, of workers' scheduled or unscheduled absences for sick or vacation time. Alternate supervisors fill in when a supervisor is absent to assume attendance monitoring responsibility for the absent supervisor's subordinates.

CRITERIA

Management should ensure that scheduled attendance is maintained by its employees so that employees are fairly and accurately compensated for work time. Adequate records of unscheduled and scheduled absences should be kept to provide accurate accounting of employee work time and appropriate compensation.

EFFECT

A minimal amount of work time was expended for a task that was supposed to function as a control mechanism to ensure proper employee attendance. Its use was an annoyance to most employees who did not feel it served any meaningful purpose for the overwhelming majority of employees.

CAUSE

The primary reason for the use of sign-in sheets was to monitor attendance performance when that control function was complicated by the implementation of the flexible work week.

RECOMMENDATION

37. We concur with the Department's decision to discontinue use of the sign-in sheet for the total employee population except after normal business hours, and to hold supervisors responsible for monitoring adherence to approved work schedules and maintaining attendance records. We suggest the Department retain a full-time sign-in sheet procedure for those few employees it identifies as chronically tardy in order to ensure appropriate management attention is focused on abusers to monitor performance and trigger corrective action. The use of sign-in sheets should be consistently imposed on tardy employees based upon an appropriate definition of tardiness.

14. EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The disposition of employee suggestions is not positive. Credit is not given, nor the disposition of suggestions explained.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Department should be credited for having established an employee suggestion program. However, the present suggestion system should be upgraded. Productive suggestions should be encouraged by responding specifically and directly to all suggestions.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The current Welfare Department suggestion system consists of a committee, composed for first-line supervisors, selected to represent each section of the Department. Its purpose is to present problems and ideas emanating from supervisors and line staff to management for action. The committee prepares an agenda for the monthly supervisors meeting with administrative staff and the Director. Establishing a suggestion system is not mandated by State or Federal regulations and is a positive approach to improving department operations.

Approximately six suggestion boxes, small containers labeled "agenda committee", are located in several areas of the Department. Suggestions or inquiries covering a wide variety of problems and topics are collected from employees in these containers and reviewed by the "agenda" committee. This committee meets on the last Wednesday of each month and is currently composed of seven supervisory staff who serve six month terms.

If the committee determines that the suggestion is useful, the chairman will summarize it along with the other suggestions or inquiries in a memorandum to the Director. Signed memos from employees may receive a written or verbal information response from the committee chairman. There is normally no further follow-up by the committee in either implementing or coordinating disposition of the suggestion.

At the monthly supervisors meeting with executive staff, the Director responds verbally to the suggestions. The supervisory staff are supposed to take the information about the disposition of the suggestions or inquiries back to their subordinate employees, where the information is verbally relayed.

A memorandum to staff from the Director announcing the new agenda committee members is sent when new members are appointed. The memorandum asks that suggestions be made to any member of the committee for discussion at the monthly supervisors meeting. The disposition of suggestions is sometimes also discussed at the monthly worker meetings with the Director.

CRITERIA

A suggestion system should encourage productive and innovative ideas that can reduce costs, improve effectiveness and efficiency of operations or improve morale. Suggestions should be forwarded from employees to a designated person or committee responsible for evaluating them and sponsoring implementation of useful ideas.

Top management should give credit to employees whose ideas are adopted. The system should provide an adequate response to all suggestions regardless of whether it is an anonymous suggestion or one that is adopted by management. The system may also serve as an alternative communication route for employees to raise questions and present problems. However, its main thrust should be to encourage and acknowledge constructive suggestions. A suggestion system should receive strong management support and regular review to determine ways to make it more productive.

Employees should be encouraged to attempt to resolve routine problems concerning procedures, building maintenance, and supplies, etc., by presenting them through supervisory personnel. Supervisory personnel should be encouraged to resolve these minor problems and provide reasonable responses to employee inquiries. If a satisfactory solution is not obtained by the employee, the suggestion system should be utilized.

EFFECT

The present system needs improvement to encourage participation by employees and assure that adopted recommendations are communicated to staff with individual credit given.

CAUSE

The suggestion boxes are not visibly placed in the Department to encourage participation. Relaying information on the disposition of suggestions from the monthly meetings verbally through supervisors does not adequately disseminate credit since supervisors sometimes do not report on suggestions which do not directly affect their units.

The current system was intended not only to solicit suggestions, but also serve as an alternative communications route to top management.

The lack of written acknowledgement of implemented ideas from the Director does not encourage suggestions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

38. Provide for the more prominent display and labeling of suggestion boxes.
39. Suggestions adopted by management should be announced at regular staff meetings and notices posted on bulletin boards.
40. Respond to all suggestions in writing to the originator of the suggestion or by use of bulletin boards if suggestions are anonymous. The Director should personally sign replies to each suggester whose idea is adopted, and forward a copy of the reply for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.
41. The Director's response to suggestions should give the reason(s) why management has decided to implement or reject the proposal. This enhances employee confidence in management's sincerity in supporting the suggestion program and respect for their input, and gives the suggestion evaluator(s) guidance in analyzing future suggestions.

DEPARTMENT COMMENT

Administrative Office recommendations are well taken. However, we believe such an elaborate procedure is unwieldy. The Department is currently establishing a Staff Advisory Committee which we believe will get to the intent of these recommendations much more expeditiously.

15. ACCURACY OF EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Employee evaluations are not being conducted in a meaningful fashion; management has subordinate supervisors arbitrarily adjust evaluations.

FINDING SUMMARY

An evaluation policy is in effect which was developed by the Department. In some cases, there has been disagreement between supervisory and administrative staff over the appropriate content of an employee's evaluation and there are indications that supervisors have revised evaluations at the direction of their superiors.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

State regulations require formal written job performance evaluations be completed at least annually for all employees in county welfare departments. Permanent employees in the Welfare Department receive an annual evaluation. Probationary employees receive an evaluation after three months and six months, and then annually thereafter as permanent employees.

The Department uses an evaluation form that shows the reasons for the evaluation, indicates an overall rating, and has a place for comments by the rater. The evaluation also has six performance criteria which are rated as acceptable and unacceptable. These include knowledge and skill; quality of work; quantity of work; work habits; relationships with people; and ability to supervise. These are followed by short definitions of the criteria printed on the form. The employee and reviewer may disagree and add comments to the form.

Most supervisory staff have received training in evaluating employees. This training is part of a 16 hour course conducted by the Staff Development Supervisor.

Welfare Department Directive 1-C stipulates when formal written evaluations will be completed and the procedures to be followed in completing evaluations. In part, the directive states:

- The rating supervisor and the reviewing supervisor should jointly share the responsibility for the rating of the probationary employee and for recommending to the Director whether to grant permanent status to the employee.
- The rating supervisor has primary responsibility and authority to evaluate the job performance of each permanent subordinate. The rating supervisor may consult with his/her immediate supervisor (the reviewing supervisor) in order to formulate the most accurate and objective evaluation of a permanent employee. The reviewing supervisor may differ with the rating supervisor regarding an employee's performance, however, the rating supervisor should complete all evaluations without undue influence

from the reviewing supervisor. (The evaluation form provides space for the reviewing supervisor to record any different or additional commentary.)

- The rating supervisor and the subordinate should work out the content of any formal evaluation together in conferences. The written evaluation should represent a factual composite description of the subordinate's performance during the preceding evaluation period. The written evaluation should also include objectives for the subordinate to accomplish in the evaluation period which follows.

Some supervisors have related instances when they felt they were directed by administrative staff to make additions or deletions to evaluations. The supervisors did not agree with these changes, but made them anyway. Most first line supervisors interviewed indicated that the evaluations they submitted were accepted by their reviewers. Some supervisors also commented that they had received constructive suggestions from reviewers on how to prepare evaluations.

Countywide guidelines on employee evaluations, as recommended in the Personnel study by Cresap, McCormick, and Paget, are currently being developed by the Personnel Management Division with the participation of County departments through an Ad Hoc Committee on Employee Evaluations. Recommendations are expected to be presented to the Board of Supervisors in January.

CRITERIA

A meaningful evaluation system should provide for training of raters; utilize comprehensive and appropriate evaluation criteria; receive conscientious attention by all supervisory and management levels; ensure evaluations are based on facts; and follow a prescribed procedure that ensures regular evaluations. It is important to establish and follow these criteria because a meaningful evaluation system will have a very positive effect on employee performance and morale, increasing employees' ability and desire to perform well and prepare for career advancement, and consequently maintain a minimal turnover rate.

Department policy and training must stress that the rating supervisor should be equitable, thorough and candid with the person being evaluated. The evaluation should be developed in conference with the employee and include plans to improve the employee's performance where necessary. The evaluation system should provide for identifying those employees who perform above standard and are ready for promotion, as well as those whose performance is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Management must act on these assessments if the evaluation system is to be meaningful.

First line supervisors should have independence of expression, but it is essential that management be in the review process since first line supervisors do not make final employment decisions and are not ultimately responsible for the performance of the organization. A County policy should be established to clarify the process by which the rating and reviewing supervisors participate in the development of an employee evaluation while protecting these principles.

Reviewers should critique ratings done by supervisors, without necessarily altering them, to improve the quality of the next cycle of evaluations and to ensure equity and consistency. Reviewers should look for errors and omissions of information, conclusions not substantiated by facts, and evaluations that are not fair to other employees or the County.

EFFECT

The current department directive on evaluations basically provides an adequate foundation for a useful and productive evaluation system. This system meets the requirements of State regulations, but could be made considerably more meaningful as a staff development tool and management resource. Management's heretofore minimal commitment to make the system as positive and productive as possible adversely affects morale, employee productivity, growth of job skills, and consequently turnover rate.

In those instances where the Department policy was not followed, some supervisory employees have felt intimidated by their supervisors to sometimes write evaluations with which they do not agree. This lack of conscientious attention by all management levels to adhere to the Department policy results in some employees perceiving that the evaluation system is not being conducted in a meaningful and uniform manner that is equitable to all employees.

The lack of adequate comprehensive evaluation criteria to be used by raters in evaluating employees can result in inconsistency among raters in the thoroughness and accuracy of their evaluations.

CAUSE

A thorough and common understanding of criteria against which employees may be evaluated has not been utilized.

Compliance with the Department's evaluation policy, outlining the resolution of differences of opinion between raters and reviewers, has not always been followed. While the Department administrative directive specifies who is responsible for preparing evaluations and that the reviewing supervisor may

record different or additional comments on the evaluation form, apparently there has been some reluctance to do so. Instead, supervisors have been asked on occasion by reviewers to rewrite their evaluations of subordinates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

42. Ensure that supervisory personnel designated to evaluate employees are allowed to do so without undue influence from the reviewing supervisor.
43. The Department should follow its established evaluation procedures until modified on its own initiative or by establishment of a County policy on employee evaluations.
44. Reviewers should critique evaluations by rating supervisors to improve their quality on the next cycle.
45. The Personnel Management Division should address the issue of the proper roles of the reviewing and rating supervisors when they develop a proposed Countywide employee evaluation policy as recommended by the Cresap, McCormick, and Paget Report.

16. EFFECTIVENESS OF DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONAL SYSTEM

FINDING SUMMARY

The Department has established a career ladder classification system permitting upward promotional mobility. There have been several promotions in the Welfare Department during the last year. These have included clerical, Eligibility Worker and Social Worker classifications.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Career ladders are a series of similar classifications designed to encourage promotions from existing employees. The Eligibility Worker and Social Worker classifications are examples of these classifications. Employees may promote from clerical to entry level Eligibility Worker and Social Worker classifications. Eligibility Workers may promote to Social Worker positions, and Eligibility Workers and Social Workers may also promote to experienced level supervisory and administrative positions. For approximately a one year period, from June, 1976 through August, 1977, the following promotions occurred:

PROMOTIONS OF WELFARE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

	<u>Total Number of Positions Filled</u>	<u>Total Number of Promotional Positions Filled by Existing Employees</u>	<u>Percentage of Promotional Positions Filled by Existing Employees</u>
5 Eligibility Workers I, 2 Eligibility Workers II, and 7 Eligibility Workers III promoted to Social Workers I	17	14	82%
Social Workers I promoted to Social Workers II	3	3	100%
Social Workers II promoted to Social Workers III	9	8	89%
Clerical positions promoted to Eligibility Worker I	83	2	2.5%
Eligibility Workers I promoted to Eligibility Workers II	57	57	100%
Eligibility Workers II promoted to Eligibility Workers III	22	18	82%
Eligibility Workers III promoted to Eligibility Supervisors	3	3	100%
Eligibility Supervisors promoted to Welfare Administrative Supervisors I	2	2	100%
Social Workers III promoted to Social Work Supervisors	0	0	0
Social Work Supervisors promoted to Welfare Administrative Supervisors I	2	0	0

CRITERIA

Promotional opportunities should be available to employees in order to enhance morale, reduce difficulty in recruiting for higher level positions, combat turnover by providing career

opportunity, and to reduce orientation time before the employee becomes effective in the new position.

The classification series within the Department should encourage promotions from within.

EFFECT

The career ladders in the Department provide an effective means of providing experienced employees for higher level positions. As indicated in the Statement of Condition, the majority of promotions are from within the Department with the exception of Eligibility Workers I.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

17. PROMOTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There is promotional discrimination against active union employees.

STUDY FINDING

We have reviewed promotions from the Eligibility Worker II to the Eligibility Worker III level, from the Eligibility Worker III to the Eligibility Supervisor level, and from the Eligibility Supervisor to the Welfare Administrative Supervisor I level. Also, Social Worker II promotions to the Social Worker III level were reviewed. These actions have been in accordance with the Personnel Rules and the numbers of union members affected is consistent with their proportionate share of the work force. However, our promise of confidentiality to employees interviewed during this review has prevented a conclusive examination of allegations of discrimination.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

From January, 1976 to August, 1977, 88 Eligibility Workers were promoted to the Eligibility Worker III level. Of these, 30 were union members (34%).

During this same time, eight Eligibility Workers III were promoted to the Eligibility Supervisor level and three were union members (38%).

Only two Welfare Administrative Supervisor I positions were filled during this time. Both employees were non-union members and both individuals were ranked higher on the eligibility list than employees who were union members.

Of 20 Social Workers I hired, 16 were Eligibility Workers in the Welfare Department. Of these seven were union members (44%). Eleven Social Workers III were selected, and five of these were union members (45%).

Currently, the union membership for Social Workers is 56% and for Eligibility Workers it is 37%. Overall, 42% of the total number of employees eligible to belong to the union are members.

As required by the Personnel Rules, we found that employees were selected for higher level positions from a list of eligible candidates. The Department selects individuals for appointment off a list of names of eligible applicants provided by Personnel Management.

Employee interviews by Management Services staff were based upon a promise of confidentiality. During interviews with employees, some instances of alleged promotional discrimination against employees who were active union members were discussed. However, it was not possible to examine these allegations without compromising the confidentiality of interviewers.

CRITERIA

Employees should be selected for consideration for promotion in conformance with applicable Personnel Rules. The final selection of an individual should be based upon the ability of the individual to perform the job.

EFFECT

We were unable to substantiate any particular instances of promotional discrimination against active union employees. The Department adhered to the Personnel Rules and promoted union members in numbers approximating their share of the total work force except in the Social Services Division.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

18. NUMBER OF BARGAINING UNITS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The employees in the Welfare Department should be represented by only one bargaining unit in order for the union to more effectively represent employees.

FINDING SUMMARY

The current number and composition of bargaining units for these employees is appropriate. The units generally are representative of the employees' interests and concerns that are typical of their job classifications.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The employees in the Welfare Department are represented within four employee groups. The Clerical Employees, Unit 12, and Social and Eligibility Workers, Unit 4, are the primary units, and have 88 and 485 positions in the Welfare Department respectively. The one Security Officer is represented by the Investigators, Unit 18, and one Stock Clerk is represented by the Crafts and Trade Unit 13. The Clerical Unit and Social and Eligibility Workers Unit are represented by the same union, but different locals.

These bargaining units were formed under provisions of the State employee relations law, known as the Meyers Milias Brown Act. Under this law a County Employee Relations Ordinance was adopted in 1975. Provisions of the ordinance provided for a County Employee Relations Commission to oversee the formation of employee bargaining units. This Commission (now combined with the Civil Service Commission) made the final determination of the appropriateness of these units. Section 3.12.180 of the County Ordinance Code specifies the criteria used for establishing bargaining units. Essentially, they determined the largest feasible group of employees having an identifiable community of interest based upon common skills, job duties, training and education requirements; participation in an

integrated work process or continuous work flow; common supervision; and similar working conditions. Recommendations from management, union representatives, and employees for the inclusion of various classes in different bargaining units were heard by the former Employee Relations Commission before they made a final decision on the composition of the units. Bargaining units throughout the County were determined in this manner.

Employees represented by these bargaining units, such as the Clerical Unit, may be assigned to several or all County departments. It would not be in the best interest of the County or the employees if identical classes of employees were represented in different bargaining units for each department. This would create friction between employees, make transfers difficult, and be exceedingly difficult to administer wage and fringe benefits. Compensation should be the same for all employees in a classification regardless of the department where employed. This also would not be in compliance with the County Ordinance Section 3.12.180H, which states "no single classification of County employee shall be included in more than one representation unit, with the exception of management personnel and confidential employees".

CRITERIA

Employee classifications should be appropriately placed in bargaining units that are representative of the similarity of job duties and employee interests. The number of units should not, however, be excessive so as to inhibit effective employee relations.

The final determination of the appropriateness of bargaining units should be made by the Civil Service Commission in accordance with the County Employee Relations Ordinance. This Ordinance requires that a minimal number of units should be established to minimize the over-fragmentation of employee representation. The principal criteria for determining an appropriate representation unit is that the largest feasible group of employees having an identifiable community of interest be included.

EFFECT

The grouping of job classifications within a unit that is representative of similar employee interests results in more effective representation for the employees. The proper unit determination also increases management's ability to effectively carry out its employee relations responsibilities as specified in the County Employee Relations Ordinance. These include meeting and conferring with representatives of the bargaining units as well as administering the agreements with these employee groups.

CAUSE

The determination of the bargaining units in the Welfare Department is the result of compliance by the County, union representatives, and the former Employee Relations Commission with provisions of the County Employee Relations Ordinance and the Meyers Milias Brown Act.

RECOMMENDATION

46. Bargaining Units 4, 12, 13, and 18 should not be consolidated within the Welfare Department.

19. SALARY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELIGIBILITY WORKERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There is employee dissatisfaction over the salary difference between Eligibility Worker III and Social Worker I; and between Eligibility Supervisor and Social Work Supervisor.

FINDING SUMMARY

The salaries for Eligibility Supervisor and Social Work Supervisor and all the Eligibility Worker and Social Worker classifications have been determined through negotiations with the duly elected employee representatives and appear to be at appropriate levels for the type of duties performed.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Eligibility and Social Work Supervisor classifications and the Eligibility and Social Worker series are represented within bargaining Unit 4. Employee concerns about salary ranges and other compensation issues are normally communicated to union representatives and discussed during annual negotiating sessions. Concerns over this salary difference have not been presented to management during negotiations.

The minimum qualifications for the Social Worker series including the supervisor are much higher than for the Eligibility Worker series. The Social Work Supervisor class requires graduation from an accredited four year college or university and three years of full-time paid social casework experience. The Eligibility Supervisor class requires completion of two years of academic college work and three years of full-time paid eligibility determination experience. The two years of college can be substituted with two years of full-time paid clerical experience.

The minimum qualifications for Social Worker I, an entry level class, are much higher than for Eligibility Worker III, an experienced level class. The Social Worker I class requires graduation from an accredited four year college or university. The Eligibility Worker III class requires completion of two years of academic college work and eighteen months of full-time paid eligibility determination experience. The two years of college can be substituted with two years of full-time paid clerical experience.

The duties of a Social Worker are significantly different from those of an Eligibility Worker. The class specifications indicate the Social Worker series is primarily oriented to assisting welfare recipients to cope with or reduce social, economic, environmental or emotional problems. The Eligibility Worker series is primarily oriented to determining the eligibility and grant amount for public welfare applicants or recipients for direct and indirect financial assistance under the various public welfare programs.

The 1977-78 fiscal year salary range for Eligibility Worker III is 414, and for Social Worker I is 428. This difference in salaries is equivalent to \$30 per month at the first step, or 3.4%. The current salary range of the entry level Eligibility Worker (Eligibility Worker I) is 340. The Social Worker I entry class is \$191 per month, or 26%, more than the Eligibility Worker I entry class.

The 1977-78 fiscal year salary range for Eligibility Supervisor is 458, and for Social Work Supervisor is 586. This difference in salaries is equivalent to \$277 per month at the first step, or 28%.

This year's survey of salaries for these classes, comparing salaries of similar classifications in counties comparable to Fresno County, indicated Fresno County's salaries were behind the comparable counties by an average of 5% for Eligibility Workers, 4.8% for Social Workers, 3.5% for Eligibility Supervisors, and 3% for Social Work Supervisors. Fresno County's salaries were subsequently adjusted 6% for the Eligibility Worker series and 5% for the Social Worker series.

The average difference for the comparable counties between the Eligibility Worker I and Social Worker I level was 26% and the difference for Fresno County was 27%; and between the Eligibility Supervisor and Social Worker Supervisor level was 28.5% and the difference for Fresno County was 29%. Effective July 8, 1977, the difference between these classes for Fresno County became 26% and 28% respectively.

As indicated in finding #21, Reasons Given by Employees for Termination, we feel the turnover rate is not the result of current salary levels.

CRITERIA

Employees should be appropriately compensated for the type of work performed. Consideration should be given to the difficulty and complexity of the work and the educational requirements necessary to adequately perform assigned tasks. Salary levels should be competitive with comparable jobs in the labor market in order to attract and retain qualified employees.

Employee desires for consideration of salary adjustments should be expressed to their unit's bargaining agent and presented to management during annual salary negotiations.

EFFECT

The salaries for the eligibility series and social work series have been set in negotiations with employee representatives and appear to be at appropriate levels for the types of work performed.

CAUSE

The process of setting salaries of County classifications provides adequate mechanisms to identify and correct any gross inequities in compensation among different classes within the same bargaining units.

RECOMMENDATION

47. Salary levels for eligibility and social work classifications should remain at their current levels and differentials for fiscal year 1977-78.

SECTION IV - PERSONNEL TURNOVER

20. PERSONNEL TURNOVER

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Turnover of personnel in the Welfare Department is excessive.

FINDING SUMMARY

The high rate of personnel turnover in the Eligibility Worker series in the Welfare Department should be reduced to realize the maximum benefit from the County's investment in time and training of staff, and to prevent backlogs of work caused by vacant positions.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The 1976-77 fiscal year staffing allocation for the Welfare Department was 620 employees. During this same period, 139 employees (22.4%) terminated their County service with the Welfare Department (see Exhibit I). Of the 139 employees terminating their service, 65% were in the Eligibility Worker series, 14% were in the clerical series, 8% in the Social Worker series and 13% in all other classifications.

There are 297 Eligibility Worker positions allocated to the Department. Ninety or 30% of the Eligibility Workers terminated their service last fiscal year. Since most of the Eligibility Workers are in the Eligibility and Grant Services Division, this Division accounted for 68% of the Departmental turnover (27% Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medi-Cal, Foodstamps, General Relief (MFG) 17%, Integrated Intake 16% and Valley Medical Center (VMC) Intake 8%); as compared with Social Service Division 9%, and all other divisions combined 23%. (See Exhibit II).

The largest category of employees leaving the Department were resignations--81.2% (see Exhibit I). This phenomenon is discussed in further detail in finding #21, Reasons Given by Employees for Termination.

We surveyed the turnover statistics for the Eligibility Worker and Social Worker series from six other counties. While Fresno

County ranked with the lowest of the other counties in the Social Worker series, it ranked highest for the Eligibility Worker series. The average for the six counties was 16.9% for the Eligibility Worker series - Fresno 30.6%; 10.2% for the Social Worker series - Fresno 4.5%. The combined rate of turnover for these two classification series for the six counties was 14.8% - Fresno 23.3%. The following chart shows the personnel authorized and the terminations for the Eligibility and Social Worker series:

COMPARISON OF PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION AND TERMINATION

FISCAL YEAR 1976-77

<u>County</u>	<u>ELIGIBILITY WORKERS</u>			<u>SOCIAL WORKERS</u>		
	<u>Author- ized</u>	<u>Termin- ation</u>	<u>Rate of Turn- over</u>	<u>Author- ized</u>	<u>Termin- ation</u>	<u>Rat Tur ove</u>
FRESNO (6-1-76 to 5-31-77)	297	90	30.6%	109	5	4
Orange	613	103	16.8%	120	12	10
Riverside	315	69	21.9%	140	19	13
Sacramento	401	24	5.9%	315	14	4
San Bernardino	301	81	26.9%	170	24	14
Stanislaus	161	11	6.8%	78	5	6
Tulare	150	40	26.7%	64	17	26
Average without Fresno			16.9%			10

Employees interviewed cited the increase in workload and resulting pressures as one of the major detriments to employee morale.

CRITERIA

The Department should have a goal of reducing turnover to an average of other comparable welfare departments of 14.8%

for the Eligibility and Social Worker series, or the overall Fresno County rate of 16%.

The Department should pinpoint the classifications and organizational units of greatest turnover and concentrate efforts to reduce turnover there including identification of causes that can be influenced by Department management.

It is incumbent upon management to promote good morale and engender loyalty to the Department to minimize turnover.

EFFECT

Turnover is apparently higher than it should be, based on other county experience, and is therefore more disruptive of operations and distracting to management than it might otherwise be.

CAUSE

Some employees are getting bored for lack of rotation on assignments. The assignments for Eligibility Workers are limited primarily to specific sections: Eligibility Workers III - Integrated Intake, Appeals and Case Review; Eligibility Workers I and II, the Ongoing Section and VMC Intake. There are few opportunities for transferring to other sections.

The Welfare Department, in complying with County recruitment and hiring policies, finds it must frequently select over-qualified applicants who have wider opportunities for careers in other fields. This is a form of underemployment of these persons as Eligibility Workers and is due to the current labor market. Applicants with more education and experience (over-qualified) usually place high on the certification list and these are the ones referred to the Department for interviews. Many of these individuals accept the job offer from the Welfare Department to obtain initial work experience and references to prepare them for positions elsewhere.

Once employed, many Eligibility Workers may find the career is less attractive than they expected. The job requires dedication and receives minimal support from society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

48. The Department should expand the variety of assignments available to Eligibility Workers.
49. The Department should develop a program to solicit and honor requests from employees who want to transfer to

other assignments where such requests do not create imbalances of trained staff among various sections and units.

50. The Department should evaluate turnover to identify the causes over which it has some control, and take action within its authority to reduce turnover from those causes.
51. The Department should attempt to select candidates with the greatest interest in making a career with the Welfare Department or the County to minimize turnover.

21. REASONS GIVEN BY EMPLOYEES FOR TERMINATION

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The reasons shown on records of staff terminations are different from actual reasons.

FINDING SUMMARY

Employees terminating their services with the County may have more than one reason, but usually state the one that is most important to them.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Personnel Rule No. 12 of the County of Fresno, Section 12010 states:

"An employee wishing to leave County service in good standing must provide his department head with a written resignation a minimum of two weeks in advance of the separation date."

In a recent one year period, with one exception, all separating employees of the Welfare Department submitted a written notice of termination. We reviewed the 138 notices submitted by the employees terminating their County service with the Welfare Department in that period and also interviewed some former Welfare Department employees. We found that while some employees had two or more reasons for terminating their services, they usually listed on their termination notice to the Department their primary reason. The primary reasons given for resignations are:

Take another job	46.0%
Complete school	13.0%
Move	13.0%
Family Obligations	9.0%
Illness	5.2%
Job dissatisfaction	4.4%
No reason stated	4.4%
Other reasons	<u>5.0%</u>
	100%

Of the former employees we interviewed and the review of termination notices, 10% gave a secondary reason. Some of the secondary reasons were job pressure, no opportunity for advancement, school, personal reasons and job dissatisfaction.

From our review of personnel files, there was no indication that the Welfare Department is currently engaged in exit interviews. The use of the exit interview procedure is a widely accepted practice by many governmental agencies and private organizations to obtain feedback from terminating employees. Many employees reluctant to offer suggestions or constructive criticism during their employment will often willingly share information, if asked, at the point of termination. This possibility is increased if the employee is given a constructive exit evaluation by his supervisor to stimulate a useful exchange of ideas.

It is doubtful such a procedure would yield a representative cross section of reasons for termination since they are usually only successful when the employee and supervisor have a strong rapport. There is always a hesitancy on the part of the person who is leaving to create a bad climate surrounding his departure by criticizing his supervisor or the Department. This act might save his ego but would not contribute to his career. It could follow him elsewhere if prospective employers called the Department for a reference. Nevertheless, some constructive feedback may be obtained from those employees who are approached on a positive basis and who respond in kind.

CRITERIA

The Department should encourage employees to give feedback on their employment experience as a means of identifying work and procedure deficiencies that may be causing problems for other employees.

EFFECT

It is not possible to determine personal motives for resignations with any great certainty if they are related to job dissatisfaction. A well developed exit procedure designed to solicit constructive feedback may obtain this information from some employees, particularly if problems are widespread.

CAUSE

Information on reasons employees are leaving the Department other than what is stated on termination notices, and from our study team interviews with former employees, is insufficient to determine how many employees terminating their services are not stating the real reason.

RECOMMENDATION

52. The Department should experiment with methods such as exit evaluation interviews to both give the employee an honest and constructive assessment of his strengths and weaknesses, and to obtain feedback on the causes of turnover.

22. COST OF TURNOVER

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Cost of turnover exceeds the cost of upgrading physical working conditions to reduce turnover.

FINDING SUMMARY

Physical work conditions do affect morale and can be a contributing factor in an employee's decision to resign. However, there are other more direct factors which cause turnover that can accentuate or offset any effect physical work condition upgrading may have to alleviate turnover. Therefore, costs of turnover and physical condition upgrading are not direct tradeoffs. Facilities should be provided, however, which at least do not accentuate morale problems, and which permit the level of delivery of service desired by the Board of Supervisors in a safe and efficient manner.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Physical working conditions can contribute to turnover. Crowded and inefficient facilities, a shortage of equipment, and poor equipment condition certainly are contributing factors in an employee's decision to resign when these conditions are severe. In finding #36, Telephone, Office Equipment and Facilities, we noted that the Intake building and Huntington Hall are crowded and do not have sufficient private interview booths to promote efficiency. Equipment is also insufficient to promote high efficiency. An employee who is dissatisfied with the job for any number of reasons could be nudged into a decision to resign by these conditions. The Department is also aware of the conditions under which employees are working and has sought additional space to alleviate them.

However, there are more direct factors that terminating employees express as the reason for their decision to leave. These could consist of a poor relationship with their supervisor or higher management levels, dislike for the work, higher compensation goals, retirements, health reasons, discharges, management practices, limited opportunities for advancement, or opportunities elsewhere.

Physical working conditions have not been given by any separating Welfare Department employee as their reason for leaving in 1976-77. Turnover of employees in Huntington Hall and the Intake building is lower than among employees in better facilities of the Department, which indicates other factors mitigate the effects of physical working conditions on turnover such as the professional commitment of employees in those two facilities who tend to be the more experienced and higher level staff.

Although better working conditions may prevent some turnover, the full cost of upgrading the environment would have to be weighed against only that portion of the cost of turnover that would be saved by the attendant reduction in turnover. Turnover will not be eliminated, and may not even be reduced without being accompanied by other substantial work situation changes that address the more direct reason for turnover. While we feel physical working conditions in some facilities of the Department need improvement for a variety of reasons including morale, we cannot assert that the cost of those improvements would be offset by savings from reduced turnover. Indeed, determining the cost of turnover itself presents an even greater problem for evaluating the hypothesis that those costs exceed the costs of upgrading the work environment.

Costs

During the 1976-77 fiscal year, 139 employees of the Welfare Department, or 22.4%, terminated their employment. It is

inevitable that the Welfare Department incurs substantial financial costs from this personnel turnover since it exceeds one-fifth of the total personnel complement.

If we were to calculate the costs of turnover, we would have to consider its various detrimental affects and place an economic value on them. They would include the cost of recruiting replacement employees which involves the cost of advertising, preparing bulletins and applications, test development and administration, certification, setting-up rosters and payroll, and scheduling and giving medical examinations. There are also the costs of training the new replacement which involves developing training programs, purchasing of materials and equipment, the cost of reproducing equipment, and the salaries of training personnel to instruct new employees and follow-up on training needs.

Other factors of turnover costs include processing for each employee leaving the Department. There would be the time for supervisory and management personnel to conduct exit interviews, prepare outgoing ratings and complete necessary forms to initiate a request for replacement. It also consists of operating costs caused by vacancies including the delay in processing cases.

The lower productivity of the new employee while he/she is learning the new job must also be considered, as well as the time required by regular workers to rework cases of the new employee to meet deadlines and the possible costs of mistakes while job skills are being developed.

Another negative effect of turnover is that regular employees may be required to work overtime to handle a redistribution of workload that is generated by the uncovered work station or untrained employee.

Another consideration is the effect of turnover on group or team efficiency. The loss of a member can be a disadvantage after a group or team has jelled into a cohesive and efficient work unit, and it adversely affects the team's work production and morale.

Benefits

Some turnover can be helpful to running organizations efficiently and effectively. These positive aspects of turnover should be subtracted from its costs before arriving at a net cost of turnover. These benefits include a chance to replace a disgruntled, complacent or low production employee that has hampered a unit's effectiveness.

Another important benefit derived from personnel turnover is

the opportunity it provides to reduce staffing levels to conform to reduced seasonal workload. This lessens the possibility of employees being layed off.

Even overtime worked by regular employees to keep work current during a vacancy and training of the replacement employee can be beneficial. The number of overtime hours used and work units can be a measurement of a new employee's work progress, and at the same time, can be used to test workload standards.

Turnover can also be advantageous when the new worker's positive attitude and enthusiasm for doing a good job adds impetus to the group or team.

The exit interview is an important tool that can be used by the Department. Since some employees leaving the Department may be candid in expressing their views, this presents an opportunity to openly discuss problems that may exist within a unit, to obtain suggestions for improving the Department, and to examine the effectiveness of or the necessity to improve existing work procedures.

New employees tend to enter County service at substantially lower pay rates than terminating employees because of the latter's longevity step advances and promotions.

CRITERIA

Management should seek the most cost effective mix of measures to reduce turnover to acceptable levels in the Welfare Department. This should be based on the identification of the most significant factors causing turnover, and the selection of those which promise the greatest results for minimum cost. The causes of turnover, not just the reasons stated on the termination notices, must be pinpointed before measures and costs to alter them can be determined.

Management should create a desirable work situation within its administrative capability as the first and most important step toward reducing turnover. This might include better distribution of work, more job latitude for employees who wish to transfer, efforts to improve management and line staff communications, and other management techniques. These and similar administrative steps should be pursued simultaneously with continued efforts to upgrade the Welfare Department physical working environment.

The primary justification for upgrading facilities and equipment should be that they are necessary to achieve the level of public service sought by the Board of Supervisors, to improve efficiency, or to protect public and employee health and safety. Employee morale is a secondary justification, but good morale is nevertheless attendant to accomplishing County objectives of service

delivery and efficiency.

EFFECT

Turnover, or its consequences, is not normally sufficiently costly in itself to justify substantial expenditures to upgrade departmental physical working conditions.

Turnover has more types of financial costs than financial benefits, but some turnover is healthy.

Some of the employees interviewed by the study team expressed their concern about the existing working conditions. The long standing nature of facilities and equipment problems at the Welfare Department has led many employees to conclude County management is not interested in their problems, or places a low priority on Welfare administration in general. Some perceive these problems and apparent management inattention as a symptom of poor management practice. These beliefs no doubt contribute to poor morale which in turn can aggravate turnover.

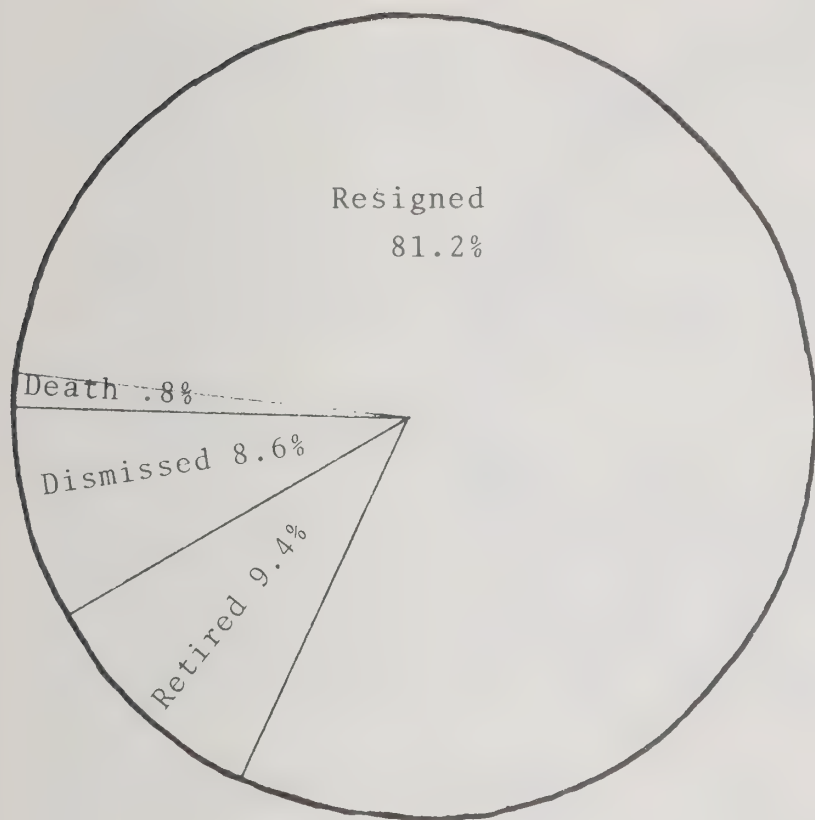
CAUSE

Costs of making the working environment more attractive can be substantial and may require considerable lead time. The Board's resources are limited, and are strained by other space shortages elsewhere in County operations. Space relief for the Welfare Department is planned in approximately three years when the Public Works and Planning Departments move to the new County-City Administration Building, allowing the Welfare Department to occupy space Public Works and Planning will vacate at the Kings Canyon complex. A decision on an interim space relief plan for Welfare had been delayed pending the decision to build the County-City building until recently. Currently, the Board is exploring alternatives that will relieve facilities problems on an interim basis at minimal cost.

RECOMMENDATIONS

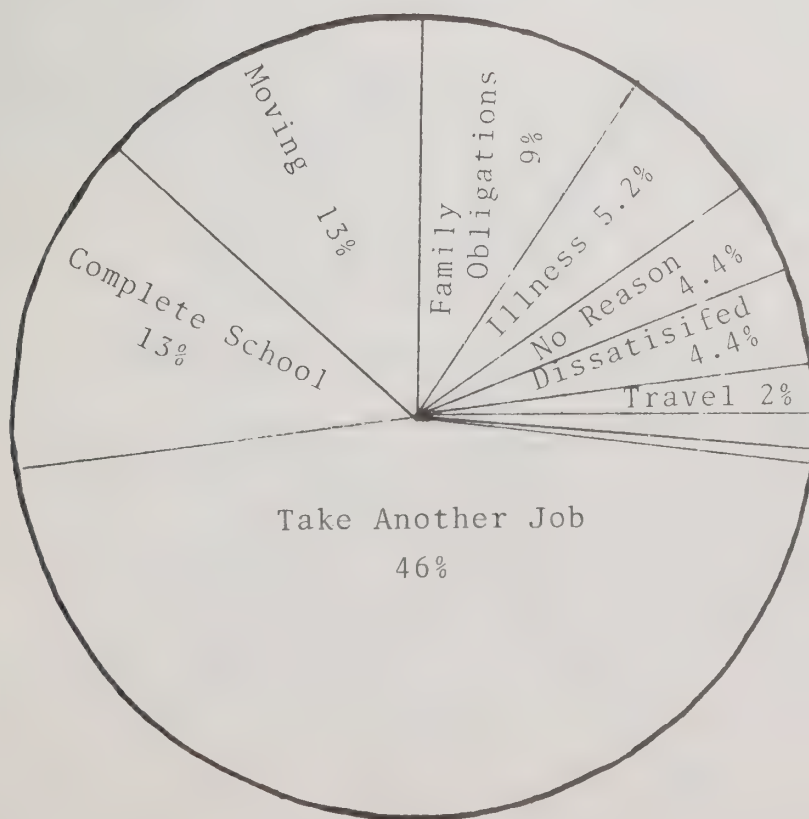
53. The Welfare Department should examine all its alternatives for encouraging employees to stay with the Department and pursue those with immediate potential effects and the greatest cost-benefit potential.
54. If the County cannot afford additional interim space for the Welfare Department, priority should be placed on minor alterations to improve service delivery, efficiency and employee morale in the Department.

EXHIBIT I



1976-77

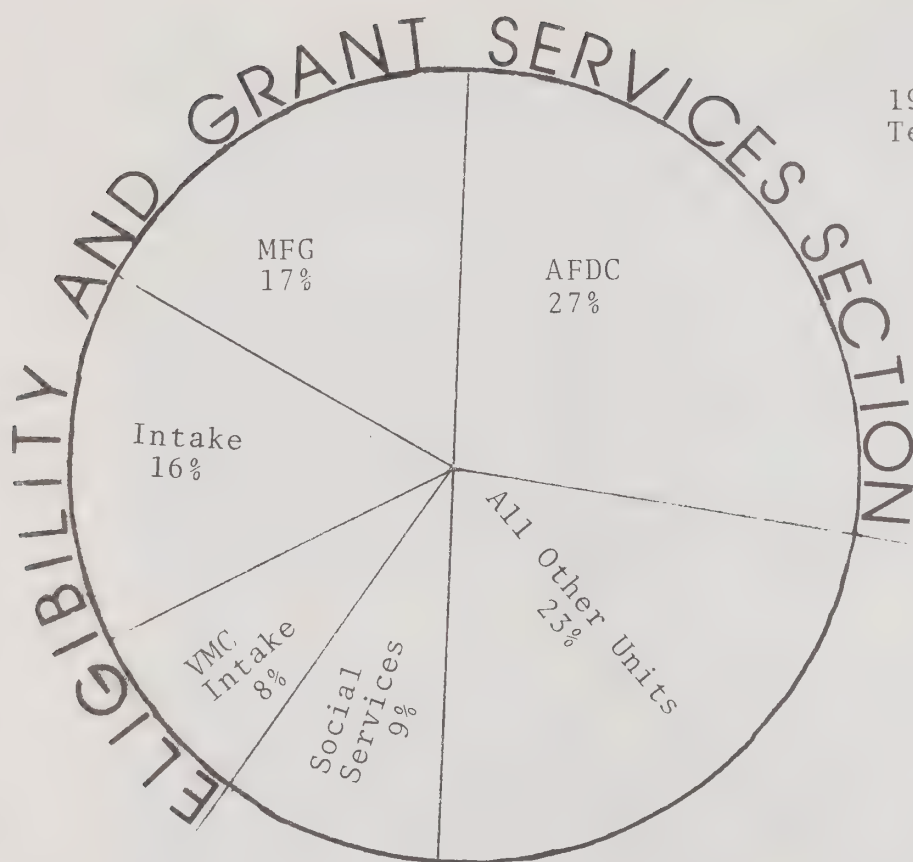
Reasons for Termination



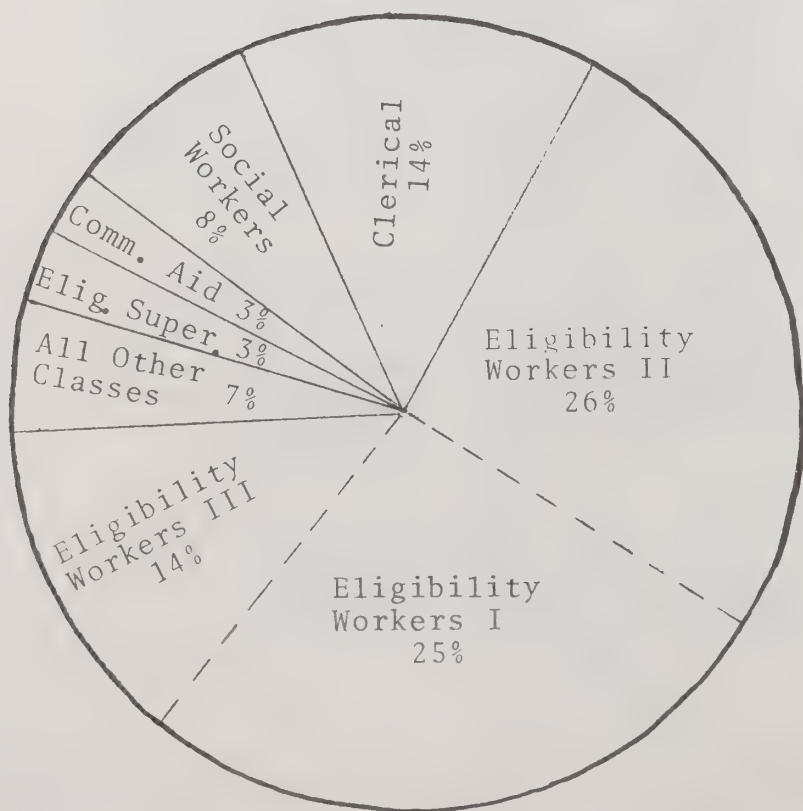
1976-77

Reasons for Resignation

EXHIBIT II



1976-77 Distribution of Terminations by Classification



SECTION V - STAFFING AND WORKLOAD

23. POTENTIAL FOR LAYOFFS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Director threatened to lay off employees if the Grand Jury continued extensive interviewing of department employees.

FINDING SUMMARY

The State requires the County to abide by strict administrative cost controls to be eligible for State subventions. Workload is the determining factor which establishes the level of staffing in each program the State will reimburse. The actual amount of staff time lost due to being subpoenaed before the Grand Jury did not cause a disruption of sufficient size to result in a State sanction of funding.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

In a May 13, 1977 letter to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, responding to the May 3, 1977 Grand Jury presentation to the Board, the former Welfare Director stated:

"The State, through administrative cost control, sets both caseload and workload standards. A drop below workload or caseload standards results in loss of administrative funds used to employ personnel. So far, Fresno County has not lost any State administrative funds and has not had to resort to layoffs of personnel, as several medium and large sized counties in the State have had to do."

He further explained his remarks to Grand Jury members:

"What I did say was that if the work routine of the Department continued to fall below State standards, and the Department's case-processing performance was substantially reduced as a result of disruption, the State would cut back the administrative funds paid to the Department, and I would have no choice but to lay off some personnel, since no money would be available to pay them."

"The Grand Jury kept some of these workers waiting at the Courthouse for hours, more than a day in some instances, before calling upon them to testify. The absence of these workers seriously disrupted the routine of the Department and caused a decline in the case output per worker. The Department came close to losing some State funds as a result of this disruption. If further disruption had ensued, a forced layoff of some workers might well have become a necessity, and I do not see how the Grand Jury could shirk responsibility for such a layoff."

The administrative claiming system requires the Department to do quarterly time studies of one month's duration to determine the distribution of worker time to each program, by Intake or Ongoing, and to unallocable time such as annual leave time used, or as in this instance, Grand Jury interviewing time. This time distribution is then used to allocate the total payroll expense (including unallocated time) of the employees affected (Eligibility Workers, Eligibility Supervisors, and Community Aides) to the programs for revenue claiming purposes.

The State in 1975 started a program of cost containment designed to control administrative costs in county welfare departments. These time studies are also used under the cost containment program to calculate the amount of productive worker time needed to produce actual, measured workload output. This information is converted to a ratio of workload to staff to measure whether the County is complying with State limits on staffing to workload ratios allowed for reimbursement. These ratios are calculated separately for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medi-Cal, and Foodstamps and compared to cost containment targets for each program.

The Grand Jury interviewed approximately 30 employees during the month of February, 1977, which was a time study month. This interviewing activity had no apparent affect on the time study results or calculated ratios of worker productivity. There was also no affect on the amount of reimbursement of administrative costs of the various Welfare Programs. There is a point where State auditors would question a sharp increase in unallocated hours for a quarter and possibly impose claim units, but this would probably require several thousand hours of staff diversion before that threshold is reached, and we doubt that the actual amount of lost time for testifying before the Jury exceeded 250 hours. However, it is difficult to determine what volume of employee interviewing would have caused a disruption of productivity significant enough to cause possible State sanctions of funding.

The cost containment program bases targeted average caseloads per Eligibility Worker (the total number of cases processed

during a fiscal year divided by the actual number of workers) for the next fiscal year on the actual previous year's average caseload per worker. These average caseloads are targets for the forthcoming year with only minor tolerances allowed. If caseload activity rises sharply during the year and additional staff are not added to maintain the caseload to worker ratio, then the following year's requirement is based on the higher actual ratio. If caseload activity declines and staffing does not decline with it to maintain the caseload to worker ratio, the State will not participate in its 25% share of the cost of the "surplus" employees. Cost containment approved staffing levels are thus determined by caseload activity (workload) which is measured by the actual number of new cases processed and ongoing cases maintained by the Department.

Extended employee absences due to Grand Jury interviewing last February could have caused a backlog in applications pending at the Intake division during that month. However, these cases could have been processed within the next month by extra employee effort to work off the backlog with the Department still earning workload credit to remain within State cost control tolerances for their positions for the year. In the final analysis, it is the number of applicants who come to the Department who determine the workload that earns credit for staffing in Intake under cost containment. The number of staff hours available to process those applications (hours on duty less time spent with the Grand Jury) is simply reduced, leaving the same amount of work to be done in less time to the detriment of those employees who work harder to dissipate the backlog, or to the clients who get less attention, or to the Ongoing Section workers who correct the errors, or to the taxpayer for incorrect grant amounts.

The positions of approximately 114 of the Department's 620 employees are subject to cost containment based upon applications processed in the Intake Section. The laying off of personnel would not have resulted alone from the few hours some employees were called away from their jobs to testify. Staffing levels at the Ongoing Section are based on the average caseload per worker and not on disposition of cases. Approximately 170 of the Department's 620 employees are subject to cost containment affecting the Ongoing Section.

In Ongoing, no layoff of personnel would have resulted from employees being called away from their jobs to testify. Staffing levels in the Ongoing Section are based on the average caseload per worker and not on disposition of applications. The Department receives cost containment workload credit for Ongoing cases even if they are not worked. Unworked cases only mean more errors. Consequently, employee absences would not contribute to State cost containment sanctions.

The State cost containment program places heavy demands on the Department to attempt to maintain approved staffing levels in terms of average applications disposed or caseloads per worker. The Department must constantly monitor workload to adjust its hiring pattern to allow attrition to cause declines in terms of decreasing workload, or to accelerate staff growth to keep pace with workload upturns. If staffing declines do not keep pace with workload falloff, cost containment sanctions will result in cost shifts to the County or layoffs. If staffing increases do not keep pace with workload growth, worker to caseload ratios will rise resulting in higher cost containment target ratios in the following year and a permanent demand for higher productivity from eligibility staff.

CRITERIA

State-mandated caseload averages should be maintained and carefully monitored to ensure staffing does not exceed cost containment limits, or fall below permissible staffing levels due to recruitment delays or other reasons not recognized by cost containment regulations unless a real and permanent gain in worker productivity is achieved.

EFFECT

Under cost containment, the Department could suffer serious long-term effects if it accidentally permits staff to workload ratios to fall outside (above or below) State specified tolerance levels.

CAUSE

The Department did not assign responsibility for monitoring cost containment performance to a single individual until July 1, 1977.

RECOMMENDATION

55. That the Department establish a continuing cost containment analysis staff assignment to supply line administrators with the information needed to set hiring quotas, shift Eligibility Workers among programs or between Intake and Ongoing, or conduct layoffs if required.

24. CLERICAL STAFF SUPPORT

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There is insufficient clerical support for Eligibility Workers compared to other welfare departments in the State, causing inefficient use of the higher paid personnel.

Social Workers, particularly in Children's Services, are short of clerical assistance and are hindered in effectiveness by paperwork demands.

FINDING SUMMARY

Clerical staff support to Eligibility Workers is definitely less than other comparable county welfare departments. Clerical support to Social Workers appears appropriate overall when compared to other counties, but information is not available by caseload type to determine whether this is also true for Child Protective Services social casework activity in particular.

The Department needs to experiment with alternative clerical staffing configurations to find the most cost beneficial arrangement.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

No statewide statistics are collected of the ratios of clerical support to Eligibility Workers and Social Workers in county welfare departments. The principal problem in doing so is that with differing welfare department organizations, there is a definition problem in deciding whether clerical staff are in direct support to Eligibility and Social Work functions. This issue arises because similar functions are performed on a centralized basis in separate organizational subunits in some counties, while in others they are performed by Eligibility Worker and Social Worker unit clerks who are clearly in support of Eligibility Worker and Social Worker staff, while in others the same functions are performed by the Eligibility Workers and Social Workers themselves.

To illustrate, we conducted a survey among several welfare departments in the State to obtain clerical support ratios. The wide disparity in responses (Table I) we obtained probably reflects the skewed effects of definition as much as differences

in real delegation of Eligibility Worker and Social Worker responsibilities to clerical staff.

TABLE I
COMPARISON OF CLERICAL STAFFING SUPPORT RATIOS
AMONG COUNTIES OF SIMILAR SIZE

<u>County</u>	<u>Clerical Support to Eligibility Worker Ratios</u>	<u>Clerical Support to Social Worker Ratios</u>
FRESNO	1:9.7	1:6.4
Kern	1:1.9	1:4
Orange	1:7	1:5.25
Riverside	Not Available	1:3.7
Sacramento	1:5.4	1:6.6
San Bernardino	1:7	1:5
San Joaquin	1:2.5	1:4
Stanislaus	1:5.4	1:6.6
Tulare	1:7.9	1:16.7
Ventura	1:4	1:12

A substantial explanation for the differences in the levels of clerical support to Eligibility Workers among counties lies in the differing levels of computer support of eligibility functions. Fresno utilizes the Case Data system which automatically generates letters and reminders for Eligibility Worker staff that were formerly performed by clerks. Other counties rely on manual clerical systems to a greater extent, while others, such as Tulare, have additional computer assist features such as automated case budgeting.

Sorting out the definition issues, automated support and organizational distributions of functions in a representative sample of county welfare departments throughout the State would be a very time consuming project and was considered outside the scope of this study.

The State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP) does provide one source of comparison of clerical support to Eligibility Workers in terms of cost. It is limited to clerical support for Eligibility Workers in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Non-Assistance Foodstamps (NAFS) programs. There are two definitional problems with figures in Table II:

1. There are some differences in pay scales for clerical classifications among counties around the State, and differing uses of classifications.
2. Clerical support costs are accumulated by SDBP from the administrative claims of the counties which differ as to which clerical staff are charged directly to program and which are included in administrative overhead.

TABLE II

CLERICAL SUPPORT COST PER DOLLAR OF ELIGIBILITY STAFF COST
SIX MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1976
FRESNO AND THE OTHER EIGHT SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COUNTIES

<u>County</u>	<u>AFDC</u>	<u>NAFS</u>
FRESNO	\$.174	\$.175
Kern	.252	.252
Kings	.211	.212
Madera	.378	.378
Mariposa	.359	.342
Merced	.218	.218
San Joaquin	.243	.243
Stanislaus	.251	.249
Tulare	.213	.212
Average without Fresno	.227	.223
Average of 11 largest Counties	.314	.308
Statewide	.299	.297

This data shows that Fresno spends an average of 23.3% less than the other eight San Joaquin Valley counties for clerical staff support to Eligibility Workers, 44.6% less than the average of the 11 largest counties, and 41.8% less than the statewide average. Similar comparative data for clerical support to Social Workers is not available.

Despite the weaknesses in this data for these comparisons, it is clear the Fresno County Welfare Department spends considerably less for clerical support for eligibility staff than is typical among other California counties.

SDBP collects data on the average eligibility staff cost per intake action and per continuing case for both AFDC and NAFS. This information is shown in Table III for selected counties. Despite pay and classification differences, differing distributions of responsibilities between Eligibility Workers and clerical staff, and different organizational arrangements, these comparisons are probably the best available comparative indicator of efficiency in eligibility operations.

Clerical support to Eligibility Workers should enhance Eligibility Worker productivity and result in lower Eligibility Worker cost per unit of workload. An examination of Eligibility Worker productivity information among the counties could be an indicator of the effects of varying levels of clerical support. However, other factors such as automated support, organizational arrangements, and differences in cost accounting and administrative claiming would obscure any conclusions about the effects of clerical support on Eligibility Worker productivity.

TABLE III

ELIGIBILITY STAFF EXPENDITURES PER UNIT OF

WORKLOAD IN AFDC AND NAFS

SIX MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1976

FRESNO AND THE OTHER EIGHT SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COUNTIES

<u>County</u>	<u>AFDC</u>		<u>NAFS</u>	
	<u>Intake</u>	<u>Continuing</u>	<u>Intake</u>	<u>Participating Households</u>
FRESNO	\$86.19	\$ 9.91	\$12.23	\$9.60
Kern	68.04	13.00	18.39	8.70
Kings	47.54	10.11	16.63	3.64

<u>County</u>	<u>AFDC</u>		<u>NAFS</u>	
	<u>Intake</u>	<u>Continuing</u>	<u>Intake</u>	<u>Participating Households</u>
Madera	56.44	10.95	11.53	5.81
Mariposa	26.54	12.41	10.42	5.25
Merced	51.39	10.22	23.84	6.84
San Joaquin	62.24	12.32	23.37	9.49
Stanislaus	43.60	9.96	13.31	4.29
Tulare	43.45	10.22	6.82	5.04
Average without Fresno	54.16	11.31	15.79	6.82
Average of 11 Largest Counties	60.49	11.38	14.99	6.16
Statewide Average	50.93	10.27	12.59	6.33

Consistent with finding #27, Worker Caseloads Comparison with Other Counties, the data in Table III shows intake AFDC costs and NAFS ongoing costs considerably above the Valley counties, the eleven largest counties, and the State. Fresno County's AFDC ongoing and NAFS intake productivity are somewhat better than the other averages as indicated by lower than average eligibility staff costs per unit of workload.

CRITERIA

The appropriate mix of clerical staff to Eligibility Workers and Social Workers is primarily an efficiency issue. The Department should experiment with different staffing configurations to determine which ratios of clerical to Eligibility and Social Worker personnel are most cost beneficial for differing types of caseloads or programs. The evaluation of alternative staffing configurations should be reduced to comparing the combined cost of clerical and Eligibility Worker or Social Worker staff per case handled.

EFFECT

There is considerable question whether the Department under-utilizes the alternative of using lower cost clerical staff in lieu of Eligibility Workers for some functions. This opportunity may not be nearly as significant for Social Worker staff as illustrated by how close other county clerical support ratios compare to Fresno.

Added clerical support would almost certainly improve Eligibility Worker productivity if eligibility functions can be found that can logically and efficiently be delegated to clerical staff without hampering Eligibility Worker productivity. Other adjustments in eligibility organization and procedures could generate greater Eligibility Worker productivity gains than enhancements to clerical support. We note, for instance, that low levels of clerical support in AFDC Ongoing and NAFS intake do not appear to adversely affect productivity to any measurable extent when measured against the productivity of other counties.

The Eligibility Worker productivity issue appears to be considerably broader in Intake than the question of clerical staff support. It appears to us that a more substantial explanation lies in Eligibility Worker case management practices. This will be discussed in finding #2 on Integrated Intake. The Department has also recently recognized that administrative decisions distributing Intake staff among call-in offices, VMC, and Integrated Intake have also contributed to a low Eligibility Worker productivity performance average in Intake.

CAUSE

The previous administration was quite cost conscious and probably doubted that the benefits of clerical specialization would outweigh the desirability of greater Eligibility Worker involvement in all aspects of case management. That involvement may promote error and fraud control through consolidation of case management responsibility, and may improve Eligibility Worker responsiveness to clients at possible equivalent costs.

The previous administration also regarded Eligibility Workers as an advanced clerical classification series capable of performing all eligibility casework functions including clerical in the most efficient manner possible. The series was originally established to separate clerical financial eligibility functions from Social Worker functions several years ago when both were performed by "Public Assistance Workers". It is probably true that eligibility has since become sufficiently complex to justify more purely clerical classification series participation to allow Eligibility Workers to specialize in eligibility and grant regulation administration. Other states have recognized

this development by retitling their eligibility workers to such names as "Eligibility Technicians" or "Financial Case Workers".

RECOMMENDATIONS

56. That the Department experiment with different clerical to eligibility staffing configurations to find a more cost beneficial arrangement, and collect the necessary cost and performance data to provide an accurate analysis of the productivity results of each alternative.
57. That the Department examine its case management policies and procedures to isolate and time-cost quantify the most significant variables affecting productivity such as interviewing, or verifications. The Department should explore alternatives for reducing the staff time investment in these key variables and establish a goal of improving its productivity in programs where it ranks below State averages to a level which is equal or exceeds most other counties. Such a goal is essential to meet the requirements of the State's administrative cost containment program and avoid cost shifts to the County.
58. The Department should extend newly developed efforts to monitor workload and staff distribution for Eligibility Workers to clerical staff to also balance workload.

25. STAFFING FOR SEASONAL WORKLOAD DEMANDS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The staff should be augmented during the busy winter season.

Turnover and seasonal staffing fluctuation causes placement of excessive numbers of untrained employees in Intake functions.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Department attempts to maintain staffing levels appropriate to each functional section without exceeding allowable limits set by the State for each aid program under the cost

containment program. The Department currently hires employees throughout the year and is beginning to shift employees between sections to compensate for workload fluctuations.

Hiring practices could be adjusted so that more trained staff is available during the period when the workload is heaviest.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Welfare Department hired 146 employees from July, 1976 through June, 1977. Tables I and II show the results of the Department's hiring efforts by month for this period, the net effect on staffing levels, and compares this work force to workload levels.

Of the 146 employees hired, 86 (58.9%) were Eligibility Workers I and 37 (25.3%) were Typist Clerks I. The remaining new hires were distributed among miscellaneous classes. More Eligibility Workers were hired during the months of September through January. The hiring pattern is consistent with workload data statistics for the Ongoing Section--workload during the same period increased progressively from October through April. Consequently, more untrained employees were hired during the heaviest workload period when trained workers were needed to cope with increased workload demands and job pressures. Eligibility Supervisors have less time during this period to devote to training of new employees because they are more involved in reviewing cases, follow-up on corrections, and controls to ensure that cases are being processed within the limits imposed by regulations.

A review of the average MFG (Medi-Cal, Foodstamps, and General Relief) Ongoing caseloads for the last three years indicated an increased in workload generally starting in December (10,583 cases), peaking in May (12,367 cases), and then dropping back to the December figure. Average AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) Ongoing caseloads during this time also rose in December (10,950 cases) and peaked in March (11,483 cases) and then declined to 10,850 cases in July.

The average AFDC case dispositions in Intake for the last three years started increasing in September (725 cases) to 810 cases in October, then decreased in November to 736 cases. In January, the three year average case dispositions at Intake increased to 960, then declined sharply to 770 cases until March, when there was a sharp increase to 877 cases. After March, the caseload dropped to 623 cases. Intake caseloads, while increasing in the Fall and decreasing in the Spring, are not as predictable as the more stable caseloads of the Ongoing Section. This makes the need for staffing level adjustments in Intake more frequent, and more difficult to predict.

TABLE I

ONGOING SECTION1976-77 EMPLOYEES HIRED AND THREE YEAR AVERAGE CASELOADS

	<u>Total Hires</u>	<u>Total Ongoing Eligibility Worker Staff at Beginning of Month</u>	<u>Ongoing Eligi- bility Worker Staff Net Gain or Loss</u>	<u>Percentage of Eligi- bility Worker Staff Net Gain or Loss</u>	<u>Three Year Average Monthly AFDC Ongoing Caseload</u>	<u>Per- centage of Annual Work- load</u>	<u>Per- centage Work- load Change</u>	<u>Three Year Average Monthly MFG Ongoing Caseload</u>	<u>Per- centage of Annual Work- load</u>	<u>Per- centage Work- load Change</u>
June -	17	144	-	-	11,267	8.5%	(-.2%)	11,967	9.1%	(-3.2%)
July -	8	145	1	.7%	10,850	8.2%	(-3.7%)	10,100	7.7%	(-15.6%)
Aug. -	15	143	(-2)	(-1.4%)	10,773	8.1%	(-.7%)	10,083	7.7%	(-.2%)
Sept.-	18	140	(-3)	(-2.1%)	10,730	8.1%	(-.4%)	10,166	7.7%	.8%
Oct. -	14	139	(-1)	(-.7%)	10,727	8.1%	--	10,133	7.7%	(-.3%)
Nov. -	20	140	1	.7%	10,763	8.1%	.3%	10,267	7.8%	1.3%
Dec. -	22	139	(-1)	(-.7%)	10,950	8.3%	1.7%	10,583	8.1%	3.0%
Jan. -	11	141	2	1.4%	11,200	8.4%	2.3%	10,717	8.2%	1.3%
Feb. -	8	141	0	--	11,267	8.5%	.6%	11,233	8.5%	4.8%
Mar. -	8	133	(-8)	(-5.7%)	11,483	8.6%	1.9%	11,700	8.9%	4.2%
Apr. -	8	133	0	--	11,463	8.6%	(-.2%)	12,133	9.2%	3.7%
May -	9	131	(-2)	(-1.5%)	11,297	8.5%	(-1.5%)	12,367	9.4%	1.9%
June -	5	133	2	1.5%	11,267	8.5%	(-.2%)	11,967	9.1%	(-3.2%)

TABLE II

INTAKE SECTION1976-77 ELIGIBILITY WORKER STAFF AND THREE YEAR AVERAGE CASELOADS

	<u>Total Intake Eligibility Worker Staff at Beginning of Month</u>	<u>Eligibility Worker Staff Net Gain or loss</u>	<u>Percentage of Eligi- bility Worker Staff Net Gain or Loss</u>	<u>Average Monthly AFDC Intake Case Dispositions</u>	<u>Per- centage of Annual Work- load</u>	<u>Per- centage Work- load Change</u>
June -	-	-	-	613	6.7%	(-1.6%)
July -	115	-	-	713	7.8%	16.3%
Aug. -	113	(-2)	(-1.8%)	747	8.1%	4.8%
Sept.-	107	(-6)	(-5.3%)	725	7.9%	(-3.0%)
Oct. -	111	4	3.7%	810	8.8%	11.7%
Nov. -	110	(-1)	(-1.0%)	736	8.0%	(-9.2%)
Dec. -	111	1	1.0%	866	9.4%	17.6%
Jan. -	116	5	4.5%	960	10.5%	10.9%
Feb. -	113	(-3)	(-2.6%)	770	8.4%	(-19.8%)
Mar. -	115	2	1.8%	877	9.5%	13.9%
Apr. -	115	0	-	745	8.1%	(-15.1%)
May -	111	(-4)	(-3.5%)	623	6.8%	(-16.4%)
June -	94	(-17)	(-15.3%)	613	6.7%	(-1.6%)

During the 1976-77 fiscal year, Intake staff to case ratios for AFDC cases were 15.77 cases per worker for the first quarter of the fiscal year; 14.44 for the second quarter; 15.42 for the third quarter; and 12.98 for the fourth quarter. These fluctuations in average caseload per worker for the first three quarters are the result of workload changes and not staffing changes, which remained at a relatively constant level. During the fourth quarter, both workload and staffing decreased. However, staffing did not decrease enough to maintain the caseload per worker of the previous quarters.

Personnel turnover increased substantially during the months of June through September of 1976 and April through May of 1977 for fiscal year 1976-77. Hiring activity increased after this period and was highest from September, 1976 through January, 1977. This was in line with workload patterns.

Currently the Department has only permanent full-time Eligibility Workers because the Department feels they are necessary in order to have experienced and well trained personnel available to effectively work with complex aid programs. Extra-help Eligibility Workers for the busier winter season are not utilized because the Department feels it cannot attract and retain proficient seasonal help.

A review of the AFDC caseload for the Ongoing Section indicates 130.72 cases per worker for the first quarter; 127.84 for the second quarter; 140.75 for the third quarter; and 131.72 for the fourth quarter. These caseloads are higher than the Intake Section because it requires less time to maintain a case than to initially process it. The staffing level and workload remained relatively constant during this time except for a minor increase in workload and a minor decrease in staff during the third quarter.

Eligibility Worker staffing for the Integrated Intake Section currently requires experienced Eligibility Workers who are familiar with complex regulations and processing procedures for several different programs. It takes several months to train an Eligibility Worker transferred from Ongoing who is experienced in either AFDC or NAFS (Non-Assistance Foodstamps) and Medi-Cal to become proficient in all three program areas.

CRITERIA

Staff levels should be based on the average monthly caseloads of the various sections. These staff levels should be within the caseload standards set by the State under the cost containment program. Personnel should be transferred among sections of the Department to compensate for offsetting increases and decreases in workload, new hires made when workload grows overall, and attrition allowed to decrease staffing when workload declines overall. Seasonal personnel should be utilized to augment regular staff during the busier winter season.

EFFECT

The number of employees hired appears to follow the pattern of the increase in Intake activity in the Fall. Eligibility Workers are recruited for Ongoing in the Fall to fill behind workers who are promoted and transferred to Intake, and are also recruited continuously throughout the year to compensate for turnover.

The Department does not have as much flexibility in staffing for the busier winter season by not being able to hire trained and experienced seasonal help.

CAUSE

Occasionally recruitment is permitted to lag behind turnover and seasonal caseload growth where attrition or reassignments among programs were insufficient to prevent over-expenditures under cost containment in previous months. This forces the Department to operate short of personnel in subsequent periods to achieve offsetting savings to remain within cost containment tolerances for administrative costs for each aid program (AFDC, NAFS, and Medi-Cal). Because there are no cost containment provisions for pre-training, new Eligibility Workers are assigned to the Ongoing Section and are given very heavy work assignments without an adequate break-in or training period. Experienced Ongoing Eligibility Workers are transferred to Intake and are given intake cases in programs in which they are not yet conversant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

59. The Department should direct more attention to analyzing staffing requirements by aid programs on a continuous basis to better match resources to workload.
60. Advance the annual hiring pattern for Eligibility Workers by one month using Federal training funds to finance trainee slots so that new employees can be trained prior to anticipated peak workload periods, as proposed in finding #48 on Administration of Training, to staff the Ongoing Section.
61. Eligibility Workers assigned to Intake should be assigned specialized caseloads initially upon transfer and trained in other programs after workload peaks out, or gradually as time permits, before being assigned to programs with which they are unfamiliar.

62. The Department should study the feasibility of recurrent staff for seasonal requirements, and if desirable, work with the Personnel Management Division to develop a recurrent civil service status in Fresno County with separate recruitments. A recurrent employee is one who is hired to work full-time for only part of the year, and would be permitted to proportionately accrue rights and benefits including step advances on the same basis as a full-time permanent employee.

26. CASELOADS TO POPULATION RATIOS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Fresno County has higher caseload to population ratios than surrounding counties.

FINDING SUMMARY

A review of Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Family Group (AFDC-FG) caseloads in the eight other San Joaquin Valley counties indicates Fresno does not have unusual numbers of cases or persons aided. Comparisons with statewide caseloads and nine counties with the closest caseload size shows Fresno and San Joaquin Valley counties tend to have a higher incidence of AFDC clients than elsewhere in the State. Fresno County has the lowest rate of errors in granting AFDC to ineligible families among the 14 largest counties.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Table I compares Fresno with the eight other San Joaquin Valley counties. It shows county population, cases (families aided) per 1,000 population, and persons aided per 1,000 population. Fresno's 23.8 cases and 75.4 persons per 1,000 population compares very closely to the eight county average of 23.1 cases and 70.2 persons aided per 1,000 population.

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF AFDC CASES AND PERSONS AIDED
FRESNO AND THE OTHER EIGHT SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COUNTIES

<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Cases Per 1,000 Population</u>	<u>Persons Aided Per 1,000 Population</u>
FRESNO	448,600	23.8	75.4
Kern	346,400	18.6	56.3
Kings	68,700	20.2	64.9
Madera	46,900	27.2	84.2
Mariposa	8,525	8.0	19.7
Merced	119,300	22.7	70.1
San Joaquin	300,300	26.7	78.8
Stanislaus	227,100	21.7	62.9
Tulare	210,600	27.4	89.1
Average without Fresno	1,327,825	23.1	70.2
Statewide	21,239,630	19.8	58.6

Fresno exceeds statewide averages which we found to be 19.8 cases per thousand population, and 58.6 persons aided per thousand. The nine counties with caseloads closest in size to Fresno averaged 16.0 cases and 47.3 persons aided per thousand (Contra Costa, Kern, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Mateo and Ventura). These figures demonstrate Fresno and the other San Joaquin Valley counties experience a higher AFDC caseload than the statewide average.

Fresno has also achieved the lowest rate of errors in granting AFDC to ineligible families among the 14 largest counties according to State Quality Control. During 1976-77, no ineligibles were discovered in the State sample for Fresno. This would be indicative of a conservative administration of welfare here which should minimize caseloads.

CRITERIA

Proper welfare administration should result in caseloads relatively consistent with other counties, except for economic and social variables.

EFFECT

Fresno caseloads do not appear inappropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

27. WORKER CASELOADS COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTIES

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Caseloads carried by workers in the Fresno County Welfare Department exceed those in surrounding counties.

FINDING SUMMARY

Statistics generated by Fresno and submitted to the State indicate Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Intake caseloads and Non-Assistance Foodstamp (NAFS) caseloads per worker are substantially below other counties, while AFDC Ongoing productivity is considerably higher than most of the State.

Statewide statistics on Social Worker caseloads are not available, and results of a survey of other counties are not conclusive.

The Department needs to increase its efforts to balance Eligibility Worker staffing to workload both within and between programs.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP) collects welfare workload data for AFDC and Non-Assistance Foodstamps from all California counties on a monthly basis. This information is tabulated and published in a "Workload and Cost Comparison Report" (WACC). The data shown in Table I

was taken from the cumulative report of December, 1976, which is the latest available.

The State Department of Health, responsible for social services and Medi-Cal administration, only collects Medi-Cal intake and ongoing statistics from the various counties. No other comparative statistics among these two programs are available such as caseloads per worker.

TABLE I

AFDC WORKLOAD PER ELIGIBILITY WORKER
FRESNO AND THE OTHER EIGHT SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COUNTIES

<u>County</u>	<u>1976 INTAKE</u>		<u>ONGOING</u>	
	<u>Intake Actions Per Eligibility Worker</u>	<u>Staff Hours Per Intake Action</u>	<u>Continuing Cases Per Eligibility Worker</u>	<u>Staff Hours Per Case Per Month</u>
FRESNO	15.99*	8.90	136.06	1.05
Kern	17.54	8.23	88.90	1.62
Kings	22.82	5.87	107.87	1.24
Madera	17.86	7.83	96.14	1.45
Mariposa	39.47	3.52	94.17	1.47
Merced	22.08	6.67	106.55	1.38
San Joaquin	22.18	6.67	112.59	1.31
Stanislaus	30.50	4.74	128.06	1.13
Tulare	23.64	5.56	101.31	1.30
Average without Fresno	22.19	6.41	105.54	1.35
Statewide	25.92	6.01	114.24	1.23

*The August, 1977 time study shows a sharp increase in intake action to 22.45 per month, which is over the 1977-78 cost containment target of 21.91.

These figures indicate that Intake Eligibility Workers carry a considerably lighter AFDC application load than their counterparts in other counties of the San Joaquin Valley and the State. Fresno AFDC Intake actions per worker were 27.9% less than the eight other San Joaquin Valley counties for this reporting period, and 38.3% less than the statewide average. This translates into nearly three hours per case additional processing time. A possible explanation for this low productivity rate is the discovery by the SDBP Integrated Review and Improvement Study (IRIS) team that Intake Eligibility Workers have been spending considerable time explaining eligibility criteria to walk-ins who are found ineligible before an application is taken, and are reporting this activity statistically as "minor service" rather than an "application". The Department issued corrective instructions to Intake staff in August to give itself proper statistical credit for work performed, but this action will not be reflected in State statistics for several months.

Continuing AFDC case Eligibility Workers in Fresno spend less time per case than elsewhere. They have 38.9% more cases than the average of the other San Joaquin Valley counties, and 19.1% more than the statewide average. Finding #24, Clerical Staff Support, examines why this is possible. The Fresno County productivity level for AFDC Ongoing cannot be reduced because it is fixed by cost containment targets, and is made possible by substantial automated support to Eligibility Workers.

Table II gives similar comparative data for NAFS workload.

TABLE II

NON-ASSISTANCE FOODSTAMP WORKLOAD PER ELIGIBILITY WORKER
FRESNO AND THE OTHER EIGHT SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COUNTIES

<u>County</u>	<u>Applications Disposed Monthly Per Eligibility Worker</u>		<u>Participating Households Per Eligibility Worker</u>	
	<u>6 months ending 12/76</u>	<u>3 months ending 3/77</u>	<u>6 months ending 12/76</u>	<u>3 months ending 3/77</u>
FRESNO	106.65	120.08	138.52	197.24
Kern	63.98	88.06	140.92	179.85
Kings	64.11	72.99	273.71	224.41
Madera	89.44	113.05	178.03	170.53

County	Applications Disposed Monthly Per Eligibility Worker		Participating Households Per Eligibility Worker	
	6 months ending 12/76	3 months ending 3/77	6 months ending 12/76	3 months ending 3/77
Mariposa	98.89	90.91	220.63	227.78
Merced	47.01	50.69	171.43	189.83
San Joaquin	62.67	66.28	152.97	225.40
Stanislaus	94.71	112.59	295.41	276.83
Tulare	<u>152.90</u>	<u>133.94</u>	<u>201.14</u>	<u>267.30</u>
Average without Fresno	76.53	87.82	180.54	219.72
Average of 11 Largest Counties	96.50	103.06	219.72	224.33
Statewide Average	106.28	87.04	218.71	229.43

Fresno Intake NAFS workers typically process 39.4% more applications per worker than the other eight San Joaquin Valley counties, 19.5% more than in the 11 largest counties, and almost the same number as the statewide average. However, "continuing" NAFS caseloads tend to be considerably lighter in Fresno than in other counties of the Valley (23.3%), than the average of the 11 largest counties (37%) and than the State (36.7%).

There have been administrative problems in under-reporting the distribution of worker time to NAFS. This causes Fresno NAFS productivity rates for workers in Intake (disposition) to be overstated.

For different reasons, NAFS productivity for Ongoing cases is definitely understated. AS NAFS caseloads have declined over the last one and a half years in Fresno and throughout the State, the proportion zero purchase (free) households represent of the total caseload has risen because this portion of the caseload has remained relatively steady in numbers. Zero purchase cases require monthly recertification activity by the worker for the first three months of the case and monthly thereafter until a full field investigation is made.

This work shows up in the time-study as hours expended, but not in the workload statistics as additional work units of dispositions. Participating households are counted the same way each month regardless of whether they are recertified monthly, quarterly, or semiannually. The higher proportion of zero purchase cases among participating households in Fresno (and other Valley counties) makes this County's productivity rate lower than elsewhere because zero purchase households are a lower proportion of the caseloads in metropolitan areas of the State. Table III illustrates this point.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE ZERO PURCHASE HOUSEHOLDS

REPRESENT OF NAFS PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS

(6 MONTHS CUMULATIVE PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER, 1976)

<u>County</u>	<u>Zero Purchase Households</u>	<u>Participating Households</u>	<u>Percent Zero Purchase of Participating Households</u>
FRESNO	6,945	22,801	30.4%
Kern	2,364	12,838	18.4%
Madera	1,063	2,795	38.0%
Mariposa	187	353	53.0%
Merced	800	4,200	19.0%
San Joaquin	2,871	11,366	25.3%
Stanislaus	2,065	10,428	19.8%
Tulare	2,557	9,494	26.9%
Average without Fresno	13,166	53,910	24.4%
Average of 11 Largest Counties	141,280	836,912	16.9%
Statewide Average	213,631	1,089,568	19.6%

While we doubt errors in the AFDC reports have been large enough to seriously skew the comparisons cited in Table I, the NAFS errors have been substantial enough to place those comparisons in Table II in question.

Actual caseloads carried by workers in AFDC Ongoing are greater than the statistics shown in Table I because staff of the Earnings Clearance Unit and Appeals Unit are considered part of AFDC Ongoing for the purposes of the WACC report and administrative claiming, while they perform AFDC Ongoing related functions without actually carrying many cases.

Under the State's cost containment program, these AFDC and NAFS productivity rates have greater significance than they would for purely informational purposes. They form the basis for calculating whether County administrative costs exceed State guidelines and could be the basis of loss of State participation in administrative costs for those positions over targets.

During our study, the Department shifted a substantial number of Eligibility Workers from Intake to Ongoing to adjust for a sharp, temporary drop off in activity in Intake.

Although the State Department of Health does not collect data on the Medi-Cal productivity of eligibility workers by county, that information is available within Fresno County for dispositions workload. Both Integrated Intake and Welfare Department staff at Valley Medical Center (VMC) take Medi-Cal applications. Based upon a study for the period of July 1, 1976 to January 31, 1977, VMC staff processed 27.2% of Medi-Cal dispositions with 42.4% of staff who charged their time to Medi-Cal Intake. Integrated Intake processed 72.8% of the dispositions with 57.6% of the staff. Valley Medical Center produced 28.7 dispositions per worker per month while Integrated Intake produced 56.5 dispositions per worker per month. The overall average of Intake dispositions per worker is 44.7 dispositions per worker per month, while Medi-Cal cost containment requires 56.6 dispositions per worker per month. This shifts workload to Ongoing staff to compensate for lower productivity at VMC to keep overall Medi-Cal Intake and Ongoing staffing within cost containment tolerance levels. For example, if dispositions per worker totaled 56.6 as targeted under cost containment, Ongoing Medi-Cal workers would be required to carry 188 cases per worker to keep the total staff complement within cost containment tolerance levels. Instead, with dispositions averaging 44.7 per worker per month, Ongoing staff must carry 248 cases per worker to keep the total staff within cost containment tolerance levels. No State reports show comparative Ongoing Medi-Cal per worker from other counties to establish whether such a workload is unreasonable.

Eight counties responded to our questionnaire on social services caseloads per worker. Unfortunately, it is not reasonable to compare most of the data since counties organize their caseloads differently and generally do not count cases by service type.

Workers often carry different types of cases in a general caseload, and many cases receive more than one type of service.

CRITERIA

The Welfare Department should monitor its workload closely to permit it to redistribute eligibility staff among programs as workload fluctuates. Similarly, the Department must monitor its overall workload level throughout the year to ensure that staffing does not exceed the levels justified which could subject the County to revenue losses.

It is reasonable to expect caseloads per worker in Fresno County to approximate levels throughout the State.

EFFECT

There is an imbalance in the overall distribution of work among major organizational units. Some sections of the Department are being required to work heavy caseloads to make up for staffing overruns of arbitrarily set cost containment tolerance levels which occurred in earlier periods in those sections when workload fell below the level required to justify the number of staff assigned. We understand that the distribution of work among workers within units is also uneven and adjustments are not routinely made.

Workload in AFDC Intake shows a continuing, substantial underproductivity which appears odd since primarily experienced level Eligibility Workers are assigned there.

CAUSE

The Department has not provided for a permanent and continuous examination of its administrative claim, workload trends, statistical reporting, or staffing distributions. Its examinations were periodic only, and designed to address questioned statistics or major changes in workload distribution among divisions. Not until July, 1977 was a "coordinator" assigned to monitor these variables to assist in complying with cost containment guidelines.

Productivity levels for AFDC Intake are offset by qualitative accomplishments in case management that require more worker time. These include single worker service to clients to improve responsiveness, and heavy case screening to promote eligibility and grant accuracy at the time a case is put on aid.

RECOMMENDATIONS

63. Selected staff should be assigned to monitor the accuracy of the administrative claiming process, and statistical reporting to the State.
64. Selected staff should also be assigned to monitor fluctuations in workload to staffing ratios to determine when staff should be shifted between functions to control costs and equitably distribute work.

See finding #2, Integrated Intake, for observations concerning low productivity levels in AFDC Intake. The IRIS being performed by the State Department of Benefit Payments is expected to specifically address the reasons for underproductivity in AFDC Intake and exceptional rates of productivity in AFDC Ongoing.

28. CASE ASSIGNMENT

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The quality of work and case complexity are not acknowledged in assigning caseloads. There should be "floating" Eligibility Workers to cover caseloads when regular workers are absent.

FINDING SUMMARY

Caseloads are assigned based upon either an average number of cases per worker or a combination of average caseload and alphabetical or geographic case assignment where each worker is responsible for all cases within a block of the alphabet or geographic district. Cases are distributed by type of program but not by the degree of individual case complexity. Cases at Intake are completed as much as possible prior to scheduled absences and redistributed to other workers for unscheduled absences, depending on the length of the absence. Ongoing caseloads are not generally redistributed to other workers because of brief absences, but portions of caseloads assigned to vacant positions and needing immediate attention due to status changes or scheduled periodic review are assigned to other workers.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Eligibility Workers in the Intake Section receive a maximum number of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and

Medically Needy (MN) cases per month. This number is currently 10 AFDC and 12 MN cases, but is adjusted monthly based on the total of applications taken. Caseloads for each worker are monitored by a clerk to ensure equal distribution. Less complex cases, such as for Foodstamps only, are not controlled, except that the total cases assigned per individual Eligibility Worker is approximately 30 per month. Cases are processed as much as possible prior to scheduled absences and redistributed to other workers for unscheduled absences, depending on the length of the absence.

The Intake Section also assigns new cases to the AFDC Ongoing Section based primarily on individual caseloads. Secondary consideration is given to keeping caseloads in general geographic areas in order to minimize travel time if a home call becomes necessary on a case. Caseloads average 140 per Eligibility Worker. Clients are sent a form monthly they are required to fill out to remain qualified for AFDC aid and on which they are notified at the time of case transfer to Ongoing who their case worker is. If they do not remember when they call who their worker is, the call is transferred to the Records Room to find the worker assigned the case.

The ongoing cases for Medically Needy (MN), Medically Indigent (MI), Non-Assistance Foodstamps (NAFS), and General Relief (GR) are assigned alphabetically with each worker assigned a block of the alphabet. This is done because of the minimal worker contact with the client. If clients call in about their case and do not remember their worker's name, they can be automatically referred to the correct worker handling that section of the alphabet corresponding to the client's last name. Twice a year caseloads are balanced by increasing or decreasing the section of the alphabet an employee is responsible for maintaining.

The adult MN and NAFS caseloads average 390 per Eligibility Worker. The MN, MI and NAFS cases that involve children, but are ineligible for cash grants under AFDC, and GR caseloads average 290 per worker. These cases require more attention than adult cases, and caseload averages are adjusted accordingly.

MN, MI, and NAFS cases are not reassigned for temporary employee absences. Only cases requiring immediate review (many cases are only renewed on an annual basis) are processed if they fall within alphabetical blocks not currently staffed because of a vacancy.

The complexity of individual cases for a particular program is not considered when assigning cases. While Eligibility Workers are assigned cases within certain aid programs, no criteria have been developed to further distinguish different and persistent case complexities within a program. For example, the AFDC cases at Intake are assigned based only

upon the fact they are AFDC cases. Often complicating characteristics of a case cannot be identified at Intake until the Eligibility Worker has spent considerable time with the applicant. However, some types of AFDC cases, such as those involving a step-father, are generally more complex and time consuming. A weighting system for case assignments to distinguish these differences in cases under a program is not utilized.

Spanish speaking only cases at Intake are not currently assigned to bi-lingual workers unless one is available at the time of the interview. Community Aides are utilized as interpreters if bi-lingual workers are not available at an annual County cost of approximately \$20,000. Ongoing case-loads are generally assigned without considering Eligibility Worker bi-lingual capabilities. A 1976 report indicates 8.6% of the AFDC and NAFS caseloads in Fresno County are Spanish speaking (48% Spanish surnamed).

Currently, each worker is responsible for most aspects of each case in their caseload. Because cases are assigned to individuals, accountability for errors, as well as correct processing, can be readily placed for better management and client service.

CRITERIA

Cases should be assigned by program area, considering the need for maintaining a reasonably equal distribution of the number and difficulty of cases per worker. Also, coverage of cases during absences and vacancies, accountability for proper case processing, and Eligibility Worker bi-lingual capabilities should be considered in the case assignment process.

Case processing should be completed as much as possible before a worker commences a scheduled vacation or absence. During unscheduled absences, cases needing immediate attention should be temporarily reassigned.

EFFECT

Because of vacancies, Ongoing caseloads can go uncovered and become in need of processing to prevent backlogs and grant or eligibility errors. This task normally falls to other Eligibility Workers of the unit who already carry full caseloads of their own.

Caseloads alphabetically and geographically assigned may become disproportionately distributed among workers when alphabetical blocks and geographic areas used for assignment are not adjusted often enough.

By arbitrarily assigning cases by program and not considering individual case complexity, some Eligibility Workers may be assigned a disproportionate workload.

When interpreters are unavailable, clients must wait additional time to be seen by an Eligibility Worker.

CAUSE

Locating the worker assigned to specific cases, covering vacant positions, and maintaining continuity of case processing during vacations and absences becomes a complex task when serving an average of over 29,000 ongoing cases.

Adequate methods for assigning cases to workers have not been developed to ensure the most equitable workload distribution possible, though current procedures are administratively sound and simple to operate. While these procedures do consider the type of aid involved, they do not consider the characteristics of cases that are generally more complex.

The Department is concerned that establishing caseloads of clients who speak Spanish only would create severe administrative problems if there were a shortage of bi-lingual Eligibility Workers to cover those caseloads.

RECOMMENDATIONS

65. Alternative methods should be explored for assigning cases not only by general program area, but also by considering case characteristics that generally result in more complex processing and maintenance.
66. The use of screeners (currently being used on a trial basis to assist the applicant in selecting appropriate aid programs) should continue to be explored as a resource in equalizing Eligibility Worker workload in Intake.
67. The Department should exercise greater flexibility in the assignment of workers to cover absences (such as "floating" workers), or more flexibility in the assignment of cases among workers, to ensure clients receive services in a timely fashion and disproportionate workloads are not created among Eligibility Workers.
68. Alternative methods for assigning Spanish speaking only clients to bi-lingual Eligibility Workers should be explored to ensure maximum utilization of Eligibility Worker bi-lingual skills to the benefit of the client and for the efficiency of the Department.

SECTION VI. FEEDBACK ON OPERATING PERFORMANCE

29. DISCREPANCIES IN STATE AND COUNTY

ERROR RATE CALCULATIONS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There are wide discrepancies between error rate reports of the State Department of Benefit Payments Quality Control Bureau and internal Welfare Department Case Review reports of case errors.

FINDING SUMMARY

There has been a misunderstanding of the meaning of Case Review "errors" as reported internally within the Welfare Department. Case Review "errors" are broadly defined and do not necessarily indicate eligibility or grant errors actually exist. They identify weaknesses in documentation that could result in eligibility or grant errors, inconsistently interpreted regulations, and omission of needed data. State Quality Control error rates reflect actual grant or eligibility errors in sampled cases existing at the time the cases are analyzed. This results in higher Case Review "error rates" than State Quality Control error rates, but is more useful as an internal departmental control mechanism because it detects weaknesses that could result in eligibility or grant errors. The Department should evaluate the desirability of using this internal control technique in other County interest programs such as General Relief and Homemaker Chore.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Case Review Unit was organized in 1973 at County option and now consists of nine Eligibility Worker positions, a clerk, and the Case Review Supervisor. The function became mandatory in 1975. Organizationally the unit reports directly to the Department Head, independently of the Assistant Director of Eligibility whose operations the unit monitors.

Case Review concentrates all of its quality control efforts on the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, but also looks at the Medi-Cal and Foodstamp aspects of AFDC

cases. Types of program cases not reviewed are: AFDC application denials, non-aided Foodstamp cases, Medically Needy only Medi-Cal cases, adult aid cases, General Relief cases, and social services cases.

As explained in finding #30, Case Error Rates Computed by the State, State Quality Control rates reflect actual grant or eligibility errors in sampled cases existing at the time the cases are analyzed. The principal mission of Case Review is considerably broader: to determine whether the case record adequately supports eligibility and the grant amount. A secondary but equally important responsibility is to identify common error types, such as inconsistently interpreted regulations, and issue corrective bulletins to eligibility staff. Recently, Case Review has been assigned to develop error-directed training programming for Eligibility Workers and supervisors.

Another important contrast between Case Review methods and State Quality Control is that Case Review is screening all AFDC cash grant cases rather than concentrating on a small sample. By restricting the scope of case review to those administrative or procedural errors that can cause grant or eligibility errors, they are able to review the equivalent of all AFDC cases twice in a year's time.

The Case Review program is currently divided into three activities:

1. Reading all newly allowed (Intake) cases. This occurs after Intake Eligibility Supervisors have had an opportunity to read the case and make corrections, so error rates tend to be lowest among the three review activities.
2. Reading all cases due for annual redetermination of eligibility after processing by "AFDC Ongoing" Eligibility Worker staff. These cases have not necessarily been read by Eligibility Supervisors except on a spot basis, but tend to have intermediate levels of errors because they have been recently checked by the assigned Eligibility Worker.
3. Reading all "Ongoing" cases by terminal digit periodic review to get a random sample of cases at different ages between Intake and annual redeterminations. These error rates tend to be slightly greater than those found among redetermination cases because the case may not have been recently examined by its assigned worker or Eligibility Supervisor.

An examination of Case Review error rates over a recent 12 month period sustains the figures quoted by the Grand Jury in

May 3, 1977 presentation and shows the sharp difference with the 1976-77 error rate of 2.2 percent determined by State Quality Control.

PERCENTAGE OF CASES FOUND BY CASE REVIEW WITH
QUESTIONED ELIGIBILITY OR GRANT

<u>Month</u>	<u>Intake</u>	<u>Ongoing Redeterminations</u>	<u>Ongoing Periodic</u>
July 1976	33	--	39 (21 July-9 Aug)
August	25	--	36 (10 Aug-24 Aug)
September	25	51	32
October	28	56	40
November	36	56	64
December	28	34	30
January 1977	32	37	30
February	33	29	35
March	29	28	31
April	26	27	30
May	21	23	30
June	29	26	33

The Department has analyzed the types of "errors" most commonly encountered and cited by Case Review. An examination of this error spectrum illustrates how apparent administrative and procedural "errors" in the case record can create exception rates far in excess of actual grant or eligibility errors detected by State Quality Control. For the period April 11, 1977 through June 15, 1977, errors among periodic review cases fell into the following categories:

1. Income Report WR-7; 8.8%: A required entry on the client's monthly income report was left blank, or some answer should have been questioned by the worker in computing the monthly grant.
2. Income Report Not Worked; 4.7%: The monthly budget was not worked, indicating worker illness or vacancy.

3. Employment Development Department; 14%: Exemptions from registration may not be documented, the client should have been referred for registration, or the worker may not have notified the Employment Development Department of changes in the case such as employability.
4. 16-21 Year Old; 3.7%: The case may not document the child's continuing eligibility based on school attendance.
5. Deprivation; 3.4%: The case may not show the client has been referred to Family Support Division on the absent parent, or a medical evaluation completed to determine the duration of incapacity of a parent, or showing that the parent is unemployed or under-employed.
6. Grant; 23.6%: Income to the family may not have been correctly treated in computing the grant, a mathematical error may be discovered, instances of suspected unreported income not checked, work expenses may be questioned, or questions of whether "mandatory" deductions are truly mandatory. Only the first two types of grant errors listed are clearly established as errors that would be cited by State Quality Control if over \$5.
7. Household Composition and Living Arrangement; 4.4%: The case may not adequately document who is in the house, and what the sharing of costs actually are. These errors are usually found after a client moves to a new residence and documentation fails to show whether the financial implications of an address change have been followed-up (expenses which are used to calculate the amount of the grant).
8. Other; 37.3%: Types of errors showing up most frequently in this category are treatment of unconditionally available income and income verification.

CRITERIA

It is the County's responsibility to properly administer various welfare programs as mandated by the Federal and State governments. Errors in welfare case administration should be monitored and evaluated to determine where training, interpretive guidelines, or other corrective actions need to be taken to establish and maintain good performance. This information should be developed and utilized by management to assist in maintaining control over operations.

EFFECT

The Department has, within the past two to three years, experimented and refined its AFDC review activities into an excellent system. Within the past year, the Department has achieved the second lowest error rate among the 14 largest counties in the State, as determined by State Quality Control. This noteworthy achievement must be attributed at least in part to the assistance Case Review activities have given to management and eligibility staff in monitoring and improving performance.

Because the Case Review program concentrates on AFDC, its benefits are not regularly available to the County in administering the totally County cost General Relief program. Similarly, the State and Federally financed, but closed-end appropriation Homemaker Chore program might also benefit from this internal control program.

CAUSE

In the midst of building the case review function to assist in the administration of the largest welfare program, case review has not been applied to other welfare programs which could also benefit from similar scrutiny. Under cost containment, there is doubt whether its application to Foodstamps and Medi-Cal would be subvented with State and Federal funds. It is our understanding social services funds may be used for case review of social services caseloads.

RECOMMENDATION

69. Evaluate the desirability of directing case review effort into the General Relief and Homemaker Chore programs, and expand into their income maintenance and social services programs as State and Federal subvention is allowed.

30. CASE ERROR RATES COMPUTED BY THE STATE

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Grand Jury questions whether the State's statistics on Fresno County eligibility and grant errors are too favorable because of insufficient sample size.

The Department appeared to withhold a Case Review report in the Spring that would have provided the Grand Jury with current State error rate data during their review of the Department.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW) specifies the sample size and error analysis techniques used by the State Quality Control Program for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). A historical review of Fresno County and statewide data appears consistent which would support the general validity of the system.

Error rate information for the period July 1, 1976 to June 30, 1977 is not yet available on a statewide basis. The State has only recently begun quality control surveys in the other two major aid categories administered by the counties, Foodstamps and Medi-Cal. These two evaluation programs have only provided minimal data and are undergoing further refinement.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Quality Control Bureau of the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP) is charged with conducting audits of random samples of AFDC, Foodstamps, and Medi-Cal cases throughout California to comply with Federal requirements. Error rates calculated for AFDC, Foodstamps and Medi-Cal for the State as a whole, and at State option for the 14 largest counties individually. The Grand Jury's observation was directed toward AFDC error rates, since the State only began sampling Foodstamp and Medi-Cal cases in 1976 and preliminary error rate information became available only after we began our study. The Medi-Cal and Foodstamps sampling techniques are similar to those for AFDC.

For AFDC, the DHEW specified a 1976-77 sample size of 2536 cases per year out of an estimated caseload of 455,000 as sufficient for their purposes to calculate a statewide error rate for California. Fresno County's share of this sample in 1976-77 was 62 cases per year out of a caseload of about 12,140. This is about 1 in 196 cases in Fresno, and 1 in 180 statewide. The State expanded this sample in Fresno by 28 cases per year to bring the total to 90 cases sampled. This brings the rate of sampled cases to 1 in 135. A similarly expanded sample is also taken in the other of the 14 largest counties to ensure a statistically valid finding with a 7% minimum reliability rate, by county, for purposes of comparative information only.

These samples are not taken to provide a basis for sanctions against counties, but instead to provide the State, DHEW, and Congress with continuing information on the accuracy of

eligibility and grant determination among the states in this very costly (\$10 billion per year) program.

The AFDC sample is randomly selected monthly by computer in Sacramento from among the central identification file of Medi-Cal cards prepared for cash grant recipients. It specifies particular cases by number which are to be reviewed by the local branch offices of State Quality Control throughout the State. Major features of the process are:

- Cases selected for review in a given month are evaluated for their eligibility and grant calculation accuracy for that month only, not citing errors prior or subsequent to the review month.
- Cases audited are reviewed for actual eligibility and grant errors only, and are not cited for documentation or procedural errors if these have not caused eligibility or grant errors. Beginning July 1, 1977, State Quality Control is now advising counties of causes of eligibility and grant errors they find, and identifying procedural errors they encounter.
- The investigations are conducted by State employees and include a home call and third party verification of all eligibility and grant determining factors.
- Sub-samples are completely reinvestigated and reverified by Federal Quality Control agents.
- Quality Control does not audit the Medi-Cal or Foodstamp aspects of AFDC cases as part of the AFDC sample.

Error rates are calculated for eligibility determination, grant overpayments, and grant underpayments. Error rates for Fresno County and the State are shown in the table below since 1972. Each period cited is the length of time over which the sample was accumulated and analyzed. Note that after July 1, 1976, the State changed its sampling program to an annual basis rather than every six months (for all counties including Fresno, with the exception of four large counties with continuing high error rates). The reason for this State move was that the data were not contributing to any further drop off in AFDC error rates, and there was probably a desire to reassign their audit personnel to evaluation of the Foodstamp and Medi-Cal programs.

AFDC CASE ERROR RATES FOR FRESNO COUNTY
AND CALIFORNIA AS DETERMINED BY STATE
QUALITY CONTROL

Figures shown in Percentages

Period	Ineligible		Overpayments		Under-Payments		Total	
	Fresno	State	Fresno	State	Fresno	State	Fresno	State
7/1/72-12/31/72	6.20	5.70	3.10	17.50	6.20	8.00	15.50	31.20
4/1/73-9/30/73	Ø	8.40	7.30	17.80	7.30	7.90	14.60	34.10
1/1/74-6/30/74	1.70	6.40	14.00	16.30	9.10	7.10	24.80	29.80
7/1/74-12/31/74	3.30	6.10	10.70	15.10	6.60	6.80	20.60	28.00
1/1/75-6/30/75	3.33	5.20	12.20	11.80	4.44	4.60	19.97	21.60
7/1/75-12/31/75	Ø	2.80	9.78	12.30	Ø	4.40	9.78	19.50
1/1/76-6/30/76	2.22	2.20	5.55	9.60	1.11	3.50	8.88	15.30
7/1/76-6/30/77	Ø	*	2.20	*	Ø	*	2.20	*

*Figures not yet available

As an indication of the dollar impact of reported AFDC errors, Fresno County and the State are showing an even lower error rate percentage in terms of dollar errors than case errors:

Figures Shown in Percentages

Period	Ineligible		Overpayments		Under-Payments		Total	
	Fresno	State	Fresno	State	Fresno	State	Fresno	State
1/1/76-6/30/76	.51	1.80	1.30	3.60	.10	.50	1.90	4.90

A 1975 study projects the dollar impact of errors detected in the sample to the entire Fresno County AFDC caseload. It also indicates whether the errors were "client caused" or "agency caused".

	Overpayments		Ineligible		Total	
	Agency Caused	Client Caused	Agency	Client	Agency	Client
January 1 to June 30, 1975	\$270,054	\$349,968	0	\$460,806	\$270,054	\$810,774
July 1 to December 31, 1975	\$142,565	\$237,756	0	0	\$142,565	\$237,756
TOTAL	\$412,619	\$587,724	0	\$460,806	\$412,619	\$1,048,530
Second half reduction from first half	\$127,489	\$112,212	0	\$460,806	\$127,489	\$573,018

This information shows the Department was able to direct its efforts at reducing the dollar significance to errors as it lowered its overall error rate, including those which were client caused.

State Quality Control also identifies the error types they encounter. In 1975 and 1976, the following AFDC error types were discovered (listed in order of incidence):

A. The client failed to report:

1. a) Receipt of unemployment insurance income.
- b) All other income.
2. Child no longer in the house.
3. Child not in school.
4. Assets over permissible program limits
5. Reconciliation with absent parent.
6. Correct mileage work expense.

B. The Eligibility Worker:

1. Failed to refer client to Employment Development Department.

2. Failed to take prompt action.
3. Overlooked information.
4. Computed budget incorrectly.

Foodstamp (FS) error rates as determined by State Quality Control have not been published. However, we have obtained preliminary information for July-December, 1976 which indicates Fresno's FS error rate is 26.7% while the statewide figure is 33.1%. It is our understanding these error rates are not particularly meaningful since the State has not settled on a standard definition of errors they will include.

Medi-Cal error rates developed by State Quality Control for 1976 were just published this summer and received here July 21, 1977. The report findings are based upon a sample of 90 completed cases for August, 1976 through January, 1977. Error categories are ineligible, understated liability of recipient before benefits are available, and overstated liability of recipients. Error rates are also calculated by whether the claim was paid for services in an institution.

MEDI-CAL CASE ERROR RATES

COUNTY AND STATEWIDE COMPARISON FOR 1976

Error Type	Institutional		Non-Institutional	
	County	State	County	State
Ineligible	2.3%	7.1%	2.1%	3.3%
Understated Liability	18.6%	17.6%	14.9%	15.4%
Overstated Liability	9.5%	6.9%	2.1%	5.4%
Total Case Error Rate	30.4%	31.6%	19.1%	24.1%

CRITERIA

The accuracy of the sample is a function of the total population size, the ratio of the sample size to the total population size, and the integrity of the method of selecting a representative sample. These issues can be resolved mathematically and in accordance with accepted sampling methodologies. The ultimate

test is whether the program meets the needs for reliability of the mandating agency (DHEW) within reasonable costs.

A realistic sampling program should generate reasonably consistent data over a period of time. Findings should not show erratic results, but can vary sufficiently to indicate possible trends.

The analysis of a sample may only be used to indicate conclusions on issues it was designed to address. In the case of the AFDC Quality Control Program, sample cases are intensively analyzed by State personnel (using a 10 page worksheet) to determine actual eligibility and grant amount errors. It cannot be construed as an indicator of the overall management of a county's caseload and its compliance with documentation regulations or other requirements which may not affect eligibility or grant in the sampled month.

EFFECT

The Quality Control Program produces error rate measurements of acceptable accuracy for the purposes of the Federal government, which specifies sample size and error analysis techniques and criteria. The error rates so determined for California are the officially recognized measurement of grant and eligibility errors in this State by DHEW. The expanded sample taken at the direction of SDBP meets their needs for evaluation of the 14 largest counties, and is the State's officially recognized measurement of AFDC grant and eligibility errors by county. We find no basis to challenge the level of reliability of these statistics for the purposes for which they are developed (informational). The data appear consistent which supports their general validity.

The absence of current statewide Quality Control information last Spring, which the Grand Jury sought unsuccessfully, is the direct result of the State's change to an annualized sample for most counties. A valid sample for the period July 1, 1976 to June 30, 1977 will not be accumulated until the Fall. These were, of course, unavailable when the Grand Jury presented its interim report on May 3, 1977.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

31. CLIENT APPEALS TO STATE

DEPARTMENT OF BENEFIT PAYMENTS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Seventy percent of clients who file appeals are winning. Staff are not advised of the reasons for and implications of client appeals or how to handle similar situations in the future.

STUDY FINDING

The number of appeals filed and the number of fair hearings actually held in Fresno County are higher per 1,000 cases than comparable counties. However, the percentage of cases decided in favor of clients (57.7%) is less than comparable counties. Eligibility Workers responsible for cases at the time an appeal is generated are generally not involved with a case once it is forwarded to the appeals unit, and no regular summary is distributed of issues lost at hearings or stipulated.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Welfare applicants and individuals already receiving aid have the right to appeal adverse aid determinations (made by the Welfare Department) to the State Department of Benefit Payments. Client rights to appeal are explained to applicants during initial interviews and on every notice of action on their aid status including denials or changes to aid amounts.

The case files of clients who have appealed a Welfare Department action are forwarded to the Department's Appeals Unit, consisting of an Appeals Supervisor, five Eligibility Worker III's and one Clerk. Here the case is assigned to an Eligibility Worker who reviews the fair hearing issues for consistency with regulations. The Welfare Department decision on whether to contest the appeal or grant aid without contest (called stipulating) is made by the Welfare Administrative Supervisor III in charge of the Ongoing Section on recommendation of the Appeals Supervisor.

Cases to be heard at fair hearings remain with the Appeals Unit an average of four to five months from the time they are received until processing is completed. The original Eligibility Worker assigned the case is not involved with the case during this entire period. No regular summary of issues lost at hearings or cases stipulated is prepared and made available to management or the Eligibility Worker staff.

Appeals cases are heard by a State Hearing Officer. Hearings are held every Wednesday and last up to 45 minutes each. The case is decided primarily from the content of documentary evidence supplied by the Department, and the testimony of the client or others. An Eligibility Worker from the Appeals Unit is normally present at the hearing to answer any questions the Hearing Officer may have about the case.

TABLE I

FRESNO COUNTY FAIR HEARINGS ON AFDC CASESFISCAL YEAR 1976-77DATA SUPPLIED BY STATE DEPARTMENT OF BENEFIT PAYMENTS

	<u>Average Monthly AFDC Caseload</u>	<u>Average Monthly Filings</u>	<u>Monthly Filings Per 1,000 Cases</u>	<u>Average Monthly Hearings</u>	<u>Monthly Hearings Per 1,000 Cases</u>	<u>Percentage of Filings Resulting in Hearing</u>	<u>Average Monthly Number of Hearings Decided in Favor of Client</u>	<u>Monthly Decisions Per 1,000 Cases Favorable to Client</u>	<u>Percentage of Claims that are Decided in Favor of Client</u>
Average of Eight Valley Counties*	4,672	7.9	1.7	2.4	.5	31.0%	1.52	.32	62.8%
Average of Seven Other Comparable Counties**	14,351	35.3	2.5	12.2	.85	34.6%	8.60	.60	70.5%
Fresno County	13,087	50.0	3.8	24.5	1.8	48.5%	14.60	1.16	59.6%

* Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare

**Orange, San Bernardino, Contra Costa, San Mateo, Riverside, Ventura, Sacramento

Table I compares Fresno County's appeals activity with average activity of comparable counties. Fresno has over two times the number of filings per thousand AFDC cases than other San Joaquin Valley counties and 52% more than comparable counties. The Department does not have a reporting system which explains why appeals rates and loss rates are high.

The Department has the option to request a rehearing of cases they feel were improperly decided in favor of the client. The Department may also forward unfavorable rehearing decisions to the County Counsel for possible court proceedings. During fiscal year 1976-1977, 22 rehearings were requested and three cases were forwarded to County Counsel for possible judicial appeal. Eleven of the rehearing requests were granted and of this number five cases were denied aid, four were granted aid, and two are pending. None of the three cases forwarded to County Counsel during fiscal year 1976-77 were pursued because the County's case was not strong enough or the expense of proceeding exceeded the cost of granting aid in the case.

The individual case decisions made by hearing officers do not set a precedent for future cases of a similar nature.

The number of fair hearings the County wins is also higher than comparable counties.

Just over half of the appeals filed do not proceed to a fair hearing, but are abandoned or withdrawn by the recipient or stipulated by the County. A stipulation results in granting aid or restoring former benefits, not necessarily because of Eligibility Worker error, but after considering case weakness.

Table II shows the dispositions of appeals of Fresno County clients handed down by SDBP during 1976-77:

TABLE II
FRESNO COUNTY FAIR HEARINGS (ALL CATAGORIES OF AID)

FISCAL YEAR 1976-77

Category	<u>Dispositions of Filings</u>				<u>Hearing Dispositions</u>			
	Filings	Withdrawn	Stipulations	Abandoned	Held	Denied	Granted	Partial Grant
Number	782	227	87	99	369	85	213	71
Percentage Total Filings	100	29.1	11.1	12.6	47.3	10.9	27.2	9.1
Percentage Total Hearings					100	23.0	57.7	19.2

Partial hearings are not shown on Table I because the State does not count them.

CRITERIA

Client rights to appeals should be made known to them when requesting aid and when negative action is taken on their case as required by regulation.

The person originally assigned a case should be accountable for processing the case including retention of the case if it is appealed.

Management should be regularly informed of issues lost at hearings and reasons for stipulations on cases.

One management person should have the primary responsibility for the final review of cases and determination of stipulations.

EFFECT

It would appear that unnecessary time is expended at hearings by Appeals staff, State personnel and the client because Eligibility Workers and their supervisors have no incentive to resolve issues within their authority because they need not defend their decisions when appealed. Excessive Eligibility Worker time in the Appeals Unit is spent reviewing case issues with which the original Eligibility Worker assigned the case is already familiar.

Eligibility Workers can avoid resolving difficult questions of eligibility or aid amount by encouraging a client to appeal so the case will proceed to the Appeals Unit. Clients that are returned to the Intake or Ongoing Sections after completing the hearing process are usually assigned to a different Eligibility Worker, making it beneficial to the original Eligibility Worker to encourage the client to appeal.

CAUSE

Eligibility Workers assigned cases at Intake and Ongoing are currently not responsible for a case once it is appealed. It is faster and simpler to encourage the client to appeal so that the case will go to the Appeals Unit. It also relieves the case worker of workload and may present an opportunity to rid himself of a client with whom the Eligibility Worker does not get along.

Eligibility Workers do not receive feedback on the outcome of the cases being appealed, or a regular report on issues that Fair Hearings have decided against the County, or reasons for

stipulations, to guide their future actions.

The Appeals Unit is allowed an indefinite amount of time to transfer cases back to Ongoing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

70. The Appeals Unit Eligibility Workers should continue to represent the Department at Fair Hearings and prepare the Department position paper on each case. The Eligibility Worker originally assigned the case should retain case administration responsibility including compliance changes if ordered by SDBP.
71. Regular (monthly) reports should be prepared by the Appeals Unit summarizing issues that are lost at hearings and reasons for appeals being stipulated. Summary information should receive wide distribution in the Department and form part of the basis for training programming.
72. The relief of ongoing case management responsibilities from Appeals Unit Eligibility Workers for appealed cases will permit their substantial reassignment to case management or other needed functions within cost containment parameters.

DEPARTMENT COMMENT

This department is committed to affording every recipient their full rights to administrative redress through a Fair Hearing. Responsibility for prompt and correct eligibility determinations is the responsibility of the eligibility services staff of this department and involvement in the Fair Hearing is an integral part of carrying out of that responsibility.

In order to carry out this policy, the Department will be modifying current appeals procedures in line with the above recommendations.

32. AVOIDING CLIENT COMPLAINTS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Some eligibility units are less successful than others in

avoiding client complaints, particularly over eligibility determination delays.

FINDING SUMMARY

Some units have a significantly higher incidence of cases exceeding the 45 days application processing deadline, complaints processed by the Welfare Relations Officer and Fair Hearings filed than other units.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

To examine this issue, we reviewed data from several areas that might be considered as an indicator of potential client complaints. These areas were: (1) Applications for assistance that were not complete within the State Department of Benefits Payments time limit for processing applications. (2) Complaints or problems experienced by complainants about treatment or decisions on welfare matters made by the Department that are taken to the Welfare Relations Officer for resolution. (3) Cases where clients are dissatisfied with a decision of the Welfare Department, and have pursued their legal rights to appeal the decision to the State Department of Benefit Payments.

Using this information, we constructed two tables listing the units from the Intake and the Ongoing Sections which show the smallest to the largest number of incidents in each of the three categories.

TABLE I

INTAKE SECTION

Cases Pending Over
45 Days
June-August, 1977

Fair Hearing Filings
January-August, 1977

Complaints Processed
by W.R.O.
January-July, 1977

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>
NN 20	0	NA 10	2	NN 60	3
NN 60	1	NN 60	2	NA 20	9
NU 60	3	NA 40	2	NN 70	9
NA 10	4	NN 20	3	CB 10	10
NA 20	4	NU 30	3	NU 30	12
NN 10	4	NU 50	4	NU 60	12
NU 30	4	NU 20	4	NN 20	13
NU 40	4	NN 70	4	NU 50	14
CB 10	5	Average		NN 10	15
NN 70	5	NU 40	5	Average	
Average		NN 30	5	15.6	
5.1		NA 20	5	NU 10	17
NA 40	6	NN 10	6	NA 30	18
NN 30	6	CB 10	8	NA 10	20
NA 30	8	NA 30	8	NN 30	22
NU 50	9	NU 10	10	NU 20	24
NU 20	12	*NU 60	--	NU 40	25
NU 10	14			NA 40	28

*Statistic missing for Fair Hearing Filings

TABLE II
ONGOING SECTION

AFDC

Complaints Processed
by WRO
January - July, 1977

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	
HG 20	3	
HJ 90	15	
HG 70	18	
HG 80	20	
HG 50	22	
HJ 30	23	
HJ 70	25	
HJ 80	25	Average 25.5
HJ 50	28	
HG 10	30	
HJ 60	31	
HJ 20	32	
HG 60	32	
HG 30	34	
HG 40	44	

Fair Hearing Filings
January - August, 1977

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	
HG 20	6	
HG 30	5	
HJ 30	9	
HG 60	10	
HG 80	12	
HJ 20	12	
HJ 60	13	Average 14.5
HJ 80	15	
HG 50	17	
HG 70	17	
HJ 50	17	
HG 40	18	
HG 10	22	
HJ 70	22	
HJ 90	23	

MFG

MB 10	1	
MK 80	6	
MB 30	8	
MB 40	8	
MK 90	9	
MK 70	10	Average 11.7
MB 50	14	
MK 60	38	

MB 40	1	
MB 50	3	
MK 80	3	
MB 30	4	
MK 60	5	Average 5.6
MK 70	7	
MK 90	9	
MB 10	13	

A numerical average for each category was taken and the units compared with the average. We found that four units in the Intake and three units in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Medi-Cal, Foodstamps, General Relief (AFDC-MFG) Ongoing Sections had less than the average number of incidents in each of the categories. Three units in Intake and three units in AFDC Ongoing had a higher number of incidents than the average in each of the categories.

Table III gives a comparison between units with the lowest versus the highest percentage of the total incidents for each category. This further illustrates the disparity in the ability of various units to avoid client complaints.

TABLE III

COMPARISON

UNITS WITH LOWEST VS. HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCIDENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Percentage of Cases Pending</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Percentage of Fair Hearing Filings</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Percentage of Complaints to WRO</u>
Intake	NN20	0	NA10	2.8%	NN60	1.2%
	NU10	15.7%	NU10	14.1%	NA40	11.2%
Ongoing AFDC			HG20	2.7%	HJ90	3.9%
			HJ90	10.6%	HG40	11.5%
MFG			MB40	2.2%	MB10	1.1%
			MB10	28.9%	MK60	40.4%

Another method was also used to compare the incidents between units. We combined the categories from each unit and listed them in ascending sequence in Table IV. The range in the Intake Section was a low of six incidents for one unit to a high of 41 for another unit. In the Ongoing Section, AFDC had a unit range from a low of 32 incidents to a high of 62 and the range in MFG was from nine to 45 incidents for the low and high units.

TABLE IV

COMBINED CATEGORIES FOR EACH UNIT

<u>Intake Section</u>	<u>Ongoing Section</u>	
	<u>AFDC</u>	<u>MFG</u>
NN 60 = 6	**HG 20 = 9	MK 80 = 9
*NU 60 = 15	HJ 30 = 32	MB 40 = 9
NN 20 = 16	HG 70 = 35	MB 30 = 12
NA 20 = 18	HG 80 = 35	MB 10 = 14
NN 70 = 18	HJ 90 = 38	MB 50 = 17
NU 30 = 19	HG 50 = 39	MK 70 = 17
CB 10 = 23	HG 30 = 39	MK 90 = 18
NA 10 = 23	HI 80 = 40	MK 60 = 45
NN 10 = 25	HG 60 = 42	
NU 50 = 27	HJ 20 = 44	
NN 30 = 33	HJ 60 = 44	
NA 30 = 34	HJ 50 = 45	
NU 40 = 34	HJ 70 = 47	
NA 40 = 36	HG 10 = 52	
NU 20 = 40	HG 40 = 62	
NU 10 = 41		

* Statistics missing for Fair Hearing filings.

**This unit handles Boarding Care cases and consequently would have less incidents in both categories.

The information displayed in all three tables was gathered from departmental statistics which can be obtained on an ongoing basis and can be used by the Department to formalize some system of evaluating the wide variances between units.

We also examined some aspects of unit supervision for the Intake Section. For each unit supervisor we reviewed the total months of supervisory experience, time on present assignment and previous supervisory experience to see if these aspects of job preparation were instrumental in a particular unit's avoidance of client complaints. Supervisory experience did not appear to be a factor. The individual supervisory experience ranged from 21 to 94 months for those units that had less than the average number of incidents, and 27 to 76 months for those units having more than the average of incidents.

Employees interviewed commented on how working conditions, such as excessive heat in the summer, noisy interviewing areas, and workers being crowded together in the office area, workload peaks and verbally abusive clients contribute to the worker attitudes that may generate client complaints.

CRITERIA

Welfare Department employees should be instructed on how to deal with verbally abusive and argumentative clients.

The Department should strive to minimize complaints from recipients and others involved in welfare matters.

EFFECT

Some units have consistently exemplary records of minimal client complaints while others are excessive.

Eligibility Workers' reactions to increasing workload and working conditions are reflected in their attitude when dealing with clients.

CAUSE

In an issue this broad, it is difficult to isolate specific causes as there are many contributing factors such as worker/client personality clashes, job experience and knowledge of the worker, leadership of the unit, program rules and regulations, and a myriad of other intangible facets of understanding and communications that are brought into play in relating to other people. A review of each complaint processed would be beneficial in helping to determine the cause of the complaint and a probable solution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

73. The Department should follow-up on all complaints by examining circumstances that cause the complaint to be lodged and the outcome when the complaint is resolved. This information should be analyzed to determine what measures can be taken to minimize client complaints and in what units these measures should be applied.
74. The Department should continue training sessions in handling stress situations to aid employees in dealing with difficult clients.

33. WELFARE RELATIONS OFFICER

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There is concern that the Welfare Relations Officer is a captive of the Welfare Director because of his proximity to the Department and working relationship with the former Director.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Welfare Relations Officer is accessible to clients and complainants and is fair in dealing with complaints about Welfare programs. His findings do not spare the Department when it is in error, though increasing the distribution of his reports within the Department could be helpful in directing attention to problem areas.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Welfare Relations Officer (WRO) position was established October 7, 1974 and is assigned to the County Administrative Office. Under the direction of the Deputy County Administrative Officer for Human Services, procedures were developed to implement the responsibilities outlined in the Civil Service specifications. Clients or complainants are made aware of this avenue of redress for their complaints by advocacy groups, public agencies, and signs posted in reception areas within the Welfare complex. However, the signs are affixed to the wall with masking tape and frequently fall.

The Welfare Relations Office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,

Monday through Friday. A secretary-receptionist is assigned to receive complaints of recipients either by telephone or in person.

The procedure for processing a complaint regarding a welfare recipient or the Welfare Department by the Welfare Relations Officer is as follows:

- The complaint is received via telephone, letter, or in person.
- A contact record sheet is initiated (a worksheet used to record all pertinent data about the case - name and address of client and/or complainant; the name of the worker and supervisor; all persons contacted during the investigation; and final outcome of the complaint).
- The Welfare Relations Officer locates and reviews the case file.
- Reviews case with worker's supervisor.
- Has conference on the case with immediate supervisor and worker.
- Determines source of complaint - whether it is the enforcement of regulations, department error, or client's misunderstanding.
- Works out a solution with the immediate supervisor and worker, or if unable to resolve the issue with them, approach the next in-line supervisor. The Welfare Relations Officer states that he has always been able to resolve problems without going to the Welfare Director. Conversations with the Welfare Director were irregular and usually pertained to comments on the unique nature of a specific case or a request to bring the Director up to date.
- Notify client or complainant of outcome of investigation.
- Maintain records and prepare a monthly report on investigation activity on all complaints received, including the nature of complaints and units involved.
- A copy of the monthly report is also sent to the Welfare Director, and he circulates selected sections of the report to his administrative staff down to the Welfare Administrative Supervisor I level.

The Welfare Relations Officer has on occasions become the surrogate Eligibility Worker for a case because a complaining client has experienced difficulties in communicating with their

assigned Eligibility Worker. The WRO estimates this to occur with about 5% of the clients who contact him.

The Welfare Relations Officer, during the 1976 calendar year, received and processed 1,486 complaints and inquiries.

1,360 (91.5%) were complaints of Welfare Department decisions that were found in compliance with rules and regulations.

81 (5.5%) were complaints in which the recipient had failed to supply necessary and requested information.

8 (.5%) were complaints resulting from errors traced to other agencies or other counties.

37 (2.5%) were complaints in which there was a Welfare Department error which was corrected to client satisfaction.

A random sampling of complaints processed by the Welfare Relations Officer during the same period shows that the average time lapse between receipt and disposition of a complaint is two working days.

Statistics are also regularly compiled of sources and reasons of complaints. For example, during the calendar year 1976, the most frequent complaints were received as follows:

<u>Complaint</u>	<u>Type of Case</u>	<u>Number of Complaints</u>
A. Application Status (Eligibility & Delay in Processing)	AFDC Cash Assistance Cases	112
B. "	Foodstamp, Medi-Cal, General Relief Cases	48
C. Protective Services, Children	Social Services Cases	25
D. Location of Recipient	General Inquiries (from landlords, creditors, etc.)	17

The Welfare Relations Officer indicates that many of the complaints he receives are for secondary causes. The main cause in these instances is the worker's attitude. This is another reason why he discusses the complaint with the immediate supervisor and the worker.

The following are excerpts from the March, May and June, 1977 Welfare Relations Officer's monthly report in which he addressed complaints about worker attitude:

March, 1977

"While there was only one legitimate error found in an intake case in March, I still spent a large part of my time dealing with applicants who felt that the worker was either prejudiced against them or was causing unusual delays."

May, 1977

"At least 40% of the 24 intake complaints for May included complaints about the attitudes of the staff person handling the application. Generally, this was due to the applicant stating that the worker was abrupt, failed to adequately explain the regulations, or was hostile."

June, 1977

"Without exception, June complaints (14) about worker attitude dealt with intake cases. Again, at least half of these complaints mentioned the attitudes and remarks of staff during the intake interview. For example, one applicant said her worker saw her two days in a row and told her on the second day to hurry up with her story as she was not going to miss lunch two days in a row. Another applicant complained that the worker resented her questions and did not explain the application process or why certain items of verification were requested."

If after discussing their problem with the Welfare Relations Officer the complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision, he/she has the option of filing an appeal through the Fair Hearing process. During the calendar year 1976, out of a total of 1,486 complaints, 27 clients (1.7%) filed Fair Hearing requests after presenting their complaints to the Welfare Relations Officer. This represents 2.9% of total Fair Hearing requests filed.

CRITERIA

The classification specification approved by the Civil Service Commission on October 23, 1974 defines the responsibilities of the Welfare Relations Officer as:

"The Welfare Relations Officer is responsible for

receiving and investigating grievances from clients or the general public involving the Welfare Department. This is accomplished through interviewing complainants; determining the validity of complaints; investigating departmental procedures and policy; and recommending possible courses of action to resolve grievances. In addition, the incumbent acts as liaison between the aggrieved party, the Welfare Department and other concerned agencies. This class is responsible only for grievances concerning welfare services, policies or procedures, and does not deal with employee relations within the Welfare Department. The Welfare Relations Officer reports to the Deputy County Administrative Officer in charge of the Human Services System."

"Successful accomplishment in this class requires the incumbent to have extensive knowledge of welfare policy and procedures and administrative principles, and impartially use this knowledge in mediating complaints. The incumbent must also be able to relate to and communicate with varied segments of the community and effectively mediate grievances."

The monthly report of the Welfare Relations Officer should receive wide distribution within the Welfare Department to acquaint staff with the kinds of client problems that are brought to the Welfare Relations Officer and need department attention to minimize in the future.

The availability of services provided by the Welfare Relations Officer should be adequately conveyed to recipients. The Welfare Relations Officer should be accessible to receive complaints from recipients either by mail, telephone or in person.

Complaints brought to the Welfare Relations Officer by recipients should be handled in a timely manner to be effectively resolved.

The Welfare Relations Officer should not serve as a continuing liaison between the worker and a client who cannot get along with the assigned worker.

The Welfare Department should take action to improve worker/client relationships after the complaint handled by the WRO has been resolved.

EFFECT

The Welfare Relations Officer has stated in his monthly report that recipient complaints diminish whenever the signs about WRO services are not posted in the waiting areas.

During the investigation of complaints, the Welfare Relations Officer is able to identify regulations that are not being interpreted consistently and employees in need of additional training or attitude counseling. This information is made available to first line supervisors to correct case by case, but is not summarized or otherwise provided to all administrators for use in evaluating and modifying as appropriate the overall operations of the Department.

The Welfare Relations Officer is able to resolve most complaints received within three working days. This timeliness of action may be the reason that less than 6.7% of the complaints processed by the Welfare Relations Officer were repeated complaints from a prior month during three months surveyed: December, 1976; May and June, 1977 (information was not readily available for January, February, March, and April 1977).

Only a small percentage of client complaints handled by the Welfare Relations Officer go to a formal appeal with the State Department of Benefit Payments.

When after resolving a complaint the Welfare Relations Officer continues as a liaison between a worker and client who are not getting along, he is heir to major case administration responsibility when the Department does not aggressively seek to resolve the conflict. This weakens the Department's case administration authority and undermines the Department's ability to control the case. In some instances, this obstructs the effective and appropriate administration of the case. These situations are also time consuming for the Welfare Relations Officer, and reduces the time he has available to devote to other legitimate complainants who are not as vocal but are also deserving of equal attention.

CAUSE

The signs alerting clients to the availability and location of the Welfare Relations Officer are not anchored securely to the wall in the Welfare reception areas, and frequently fall. Information on the service could be more widely disseminated.

The Welfare Relations Officer's monthly report has had limited distribution within the Welfare Department.

The Department has not taken an active role in complaint avoidance once the WRO enters a case. While cooperation with the WRO to resolve the immediate issue is good, the Department does not

frequently follow through to resolve problems where continuing client/worker conflict can be expected to recur. The WRO's monthly report has recently highlighted this issue, but not in sufficient detail to equip Department management to take remedial action. However, neither has department management used its own resources to collect this information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

75. Affix signs more securely to the walls of the reception area that alert clients to the location of the Welfare Relations Officer handling complaints of recipients.
76. Include in all informational brochures that are developed for distribution to recipients, the availability of the Welfare Relations Officer to handle complaints concerning their Welfare Department business. A brochure size sheet containing the information given on the wall signs, one side English and the reverse side Spanish, could be inserted in the brochure or given to the applicant with the brochure.
77. Forward a copy of the monthly report to the Training Coordinator so that identified problems may be addressed in the training plans developed for each specific area.
78. To assist the Welfare Department in assessing client complaints and taking corrective action when necessary, a copy of the Welfare Relations Officer's contact records (worksheet) should be forwarded to the respective WAS I or section head at the completion of each client complaint investigation. This procedure would also eliminate the necessity for the WRO to augment an already lengthy monthly report.
79. Welfare administration should examine client complaints about the attitude of Eligibility Workers for possible corrective action.
80. The Welfare Relations Officer should work with the Department to facilitate his withdrawal from cases after complaints are investigated and disposition is complete.
81. The Department should give attention to correcting client/worker communications problems and retaining full control of the case in accordance with its responsibilities.
82. The Welfare Relations Officer should confer with Welfare administration when corrective action has been taken on a client complaint and the client continues to rely on the WRO because worker/client relations have not been improved by the Welfare Department.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENT

Our plan is to develop an expanded informational brochure including the availability of the Welfare Relations Officer to be given to applicants and to be mailed out once a year to recipients.

34. ANNUAL REPORT

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Welfare Department does not have goals, nor does it prepare an annual report on its accomplishments.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Department does not have a published and distributed document on departmental goals and objectives. An annual report is not currently published by the Department.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Currently, the Department does not prepare an annual report describing current programs and accomplishments.

General purpose statements are contained in training documents briefly describing the various programs of the Department. Other training documents, such as the Social Services Staff Development Plan, describe subjects to be covered in training activities scheduled for the year. These documents are not routinely given to employees and do not state overall department goals.

Title XX of the Federal Social Security Act requires the State to prepare a comprehensive services plan each year for social services. Each county is required to complete a local plan which details social service needs and objectives. Fresno County has accordingly prepared a plan for social services. This plan is not distributed to Welfare employees and is not intended to serve as a comprehensive statement of department goals and objectives.

CRITERIA

A document describing department goals and objectives should be developed and submitted to the Board of Supervisors for

approval. These adopted goals should be provided to all employees upon initial employment. This would aid in orienting employees to the Department's overall mission and stress the significance of the role of each employee.

A report highlighting the Department's accomplishments and major program activity should be prepared annually as a general information resource for the Board of Supervisors, employees, and the public.

EFFECT

Employees may not understand the Department's purpose and hence the significance of their own positions and job performance in successfully carrying out the responsibilities of the Department.

The lack of an official annual report of activities of the Department does not promote its public image and understanding. The Board of Supervisors would also benefit from a periodic assessment by the Director of the Department's accomplishments, needs, objectives, and trends beyond what can be provided in the annual budget review.

CAUSE

The Department did not feel a document on departmental goals and objectives was necessary because they were carrying out mandated programs as prescribed by higher government levels with objectives already imposed by State and national policy.

The Department already prepares volumes of reports each year to the State and Federal governments on a wide variety of subjects on a regular as well as on request basis. Reports to the Board of Supervisors and County Administrative Office have fallen into the pattern of the "on request" or "as required" basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

83. The Department should develop, for general distribution to the Department's employees, a document outlining the Department's goals and objectives. New employees should receive a copy upon initial employment.
84. A general report of Department operations should be produced on an annual basis.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS

We agree with the recommendations. We feel the first step in producing a report which will be useful to the general public is to appoint a Citizen's Committee to advise the Director on welfare issues and assist in developing such a report.

SECTION VII - EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

35. CAL-OSHA INSPECTION OF INTAKE BUILDING

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

After discussing possible safety hazards at the Intake building with the Department, the Grand Jury requested that CAL-OSHA perform an inspection. This was done to identify and correct any deficiencies as expeditiously as possible.

FINDING SUMMARY

Nine violations of safety standards were noted by the State Division of Industrial Safety. All of the cited safety deficiencies have been corrected.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The State Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Industrial Safety, inspected the Intake building on December 21, 1976 at the request of the Health and Welfare Committee of the Grand Jury. A total of nine violations of safety standards, classified by the State as non-serious, were reported. These included the following:

- Fire extinguishers were mounted eight inches too high above the floor.
- Exit paths were less than 28 inches wide in several areas.
- Exterior doors needed exit signs.
- Interior doors were not marked.
- Two flexible cords were used as substitutes for fixed wiring.
- Guard rail at the rear of the building was 10 inches too short. There was no guard rail at the exit of the annex building.
- Concrete steps at the rear of building were not slip resistant.

-- Refrigerator was not grounded.

-- Parking area had two small depressions.

All of the above violations, except for the application of the slip resistant material on the steps, were corrected by January 31, 1977. The steps were corrected by February 14, 1977.

CRITERIA

The County should adhere to applicable safety standards for building, equipment, and other safety regulations.

EFFECT

Employee and client safety could have been jeopardized by the presence of safety hazards.

CAUSE

The Department was not aware of the safety violations until the Health and Welfare Committee of the Grand Jury indicated they felt there were possible violations. The State inspection then detailed the actual violations as shown above. Standards now in effect are much more technical than in previous years, and it is not practical to expect the Department to be conversant with all applicable regulations. However, the Department should have been aware of the more obvious violations on exit signs, exit paths and the use of flexible cords as substitutes for fixed wiring.

RECOMMENDATIONS

85. Department management should have the responsibility for detecting safety deficiencies in buildings and office equipment, taking corrective action within their capability, and initiating a Facility Request form (PW03) for maintenance and repairs by Public Works.
86. The County Safety Officer should assist the Department managers to provide safety detection and prevention training to employees; monitor department safety inspection and hazard abatement measures; and analyze complex safety issues and define appropriate corrective measures to meet safety standards.
87. Public Works should have the primary responsibility for correcting identified deficiencies in County owned

buildings. The Purchasing Agent should be responsible for ensuring the lessor corrects identified safety hazards in leased facilities and equipment.

36. TELEPHONES, OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Equipment and facilities are seriously deficient. Many staff provide their own equipment. Office space is very crowded and there is no privacy for client interviews. Telephone coverage is insufficient to ensure privacy of conversations.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Department generally has sufficient office equipment. However, some additional typewriters and calculators are needed and are being purchased. The replacement of obsolete and worn equipment has been minimal and has not been based on a systematic replacement schedule. Additional office space is needed, particularly for the Intake Section. A new and expanded phone system is currently being considered by the Department.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Equipment

In fiscal year 1977-78, 35 replacement manual typewriters and 18 additional manual typewriters are being purchased. During the last five years, only 20 additional manual typewriters were purchased, all in 1975-76. There were no purchases to replace existing machines. Of the current inventory of 273, 38 or 14% are over the average replacement age of 15 years. A ratio of one typewriter for two employees is generally followed for those employees (primarily Eligibility Workers) occasionally using them.

Two electric typewriters are to be purchased during this fiscal year. Two replacement typewriters and three for new positions were purchased in the last five years. Of the current inventory of 42, 23, or 45% are over the average replacement age of 10 years.

During this fiscal year, 132 pocket calculators are to be purchased. Last year, 30 calculators were acquired, and the

year before 55 were purchased. The current inventory is approximately 85. A ratio of one calculator or adding machine for each employee needing one (primarily Eligibility Workers) is generally followed. Currently, some employees are using electric adding machines which will be replaced by calculators when the new ones are acquired.

The Department has 6 manual and 199 electric adding machines. Except for 3 manual machines bought in the 1972-73 fiscal year, there have not been any purchases of this equipment in the last five years. With a replacement age of 15 years for manuals, 5 or 83% are over the average replacement age. Under a 10 year replacement age for electric adding machines, 39 or 20% are over the average replacement age.

There are currently 106 dictating machines assigned to the Department. Approximately 50 of these are operable and the rest are in need of repair or replacement. Twenty-five replacement machines are being purchased this year. These are used primarily in the Social Services Division. With a 10 year replacement schedule, 71 or 67% are over the average replacement age.

The following chart shows the age groups of the six types of office equipment discussed above. Over 76% of the manual typewriters are 1-10 years old; all the calculators are less than 5 years old; 80% of the electric adding machines are less than 10 years old; all the manual adding machines are over 10 years old; and 34.5% of the dictators are 1-10 years old.

	1-5 yrs.		6-10 yrs.		11-15 yrs.		16-20 yrs.		20+ yrs.	
	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Manual Typewriter	21	7.5%	189	69%	25	9%	3	1%	35	13%
Elec. Typewriter	4	9.5%	15	36%	15	36%	6	14.5%	2	5%
Calculators	85	100%	0		0		0		0	
Elec. Adding Mach.	6	3%	154	77%	17	8.5%	8	4%	14	7%
Manual Add. Mach.	--	--	--	--	1	17%	0		5	8%
Dictator	25	24%	10	9.5%	71	67%	0		0	

The condition of the equipment varies considerably depending on its age and the amount of use it has received.

A periodic review of the age, general condition and amount of repairs on all these types of equipment has been performed to determine which equipment should be replaced, reassigned, or repaired. However, a regular replacement schedule has not been implemented.

Some employees have chosen to bring their own calculators rather than use or share existing calculators or electric adding machines. The calculators are felt to be faster, particularly for multiplication.

Office Space

A report of May 24, 1977 by the County Administrative Office on County space needs indicated a Welfare Department need for a total of 137,286 square feet, and a present allocation of 82,286 square feet.

While most areas of the Department are crowded, the Intake building has the most acute space deficiencies for the functions housed there. The Department's Intake Section currently occupies approximately 14,000 square feet in the building on the Southeast corner of Chance and Kings Canyon. The report on space needs indicated a need for approximately 21,000 square feet, or a deficit of 7,000 square feet. The Social Services Division located in Huntington Hall and West Hall currently occupies 13,000 square feet. The review of their needs indicated they need 15,000 square feet, or 2,000 more square feet.

There are currently 68 interview rooms or booths located throughout the various Welfare buildings. These vary in quality and privacy from small private rooms with doors to open booths formed by partitions. The interview booths at the Intake building total 24. Of these, 12 are open booths and one is an open room with desks. These afford very minimal privacy and are noisy when in use because of foot traffic, children brought in with clients, and numerous business conversations being conducted in the immediate area. One of the primary requirements of the Intake Section, as noted in the May 24 County Administrative Office report on space, is that they should have 35 individual interviewing booths. This need is based upon the heavy usage of the current booths and the long waiting times of clients, particularly during the winter months. These additional booths would not provide immediate service for all clients during peak usage periods, but would greatly alleviate frequently long waiting times for obtaining a booth to conduct interviews.

The interview booths located in the other areas of the Department are generally more private, but also are sometimes very noisy.

The two interview rooms in Huntington Hall for the Social Services Division are very private and functional. However, these are the only rooms available for private interviews and are frequently in use. Consequently, overflow interviews are sometimes held in Social Workers' offices.

Additional positions added over the last four years (approximately 40) have been absorbed either in existing office space, the remaining space (25% or 3500 square feet) of the Intake building acquired when the Elections Department moved to a new location in 1973, or in the trailers at Valley Medical Center (VMC) totaling 2800 square feet added in 1974. During this same time, approximately 1000 square feet was given up for the Family Support Division in the Commissary building. This net additional space of 5300 square feet has done little to alleviate the space deficit, but has kept it from becoming even more critical.

Telephone Equipment

There are currently 378 phones in the Welfare Department. A new phone system is currently being studied jointly by the Department and the County Administrative Office that will provide more features, such as the ability of an employee to answer another employee's phone at their own desk without walking to the other person's phone. Most phones are located in employees' offices which are separate from interview areas assuring the privacy of phone conversations. The primary exception is in Huntington Hall, where phone conversations are of necessity conducted in employees' offices where overflow interviews may be in progress.

CRITERIA

To ensure the most economical use of office equipment, it should be replaced if unserviceable or rotated to higher or lower usage areas of the Department based upon an annual review of condition. This review should consider usage, maintenance cost, and downtime of each piece of office equipment.

Office equipment for additional permanent employees should be purchased when they are initially hired to ensure their effectiveness is not hampered by equipment shortages.

Sufficient office space should be available to ensure the safe, efficient and effective operation of the Department and maintain good morale.

An adequate number of interview booths affording reasonable privacy and noise levels should be available.

An adequate phone system should be utilized to minimize time spent answering calls for other employees.

EFFECT

Inadequate equipment can result in low employee productivity.

Irregular or inadequate replacement of office equipment can result in more frequent repairs and loss in employee productivity due to equipment downtime.

Overcrowded working conditions, lack of privacy for phone conversations, and the lack of private interview booths adversely affect employee morale and decrease the Department's ability to serve clients promptly and confidentially.

CAUSE

The current office and interviewing space deficit, and lack of privacy for some phone conversations, is the result of not providing adequate additional space over a period of several years.

Budget requests from the Welfare Department for additional space and office equipment have traditionally been very minimal. The Department's administration has been conservative in requesting additional resources because of a conservative County budget policy in recent years. Also, the lack of a County wide office equipment replacement standard has been disadvantageous to the Department in substantiating requests for new equipment.

The Master Plan developed for the VMC complex in 1972 envisioned Welfare programs becoming a Federal responsibility and, therefore, did not include adequate space to meet the Department's needs.

Major space additions and alterations in the Welfare Department are also dependent upon the space requirements of the other departments at the VMC complex. The delay in addressing these needs, in part, results from awaiting decisions on the Health Department administration building and the joint County-City facility which would house the Public Works and Planning Departments. Part of the space these departments would vacate at the Kings Canyon complex would become available to relieve conditions at the Welfare Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

88. The Welfare Department should update previous requests for office equipment and develop a phased office equipment replacement program.

89. Ensure that adequate office equipment is purchased as additional employees are added to the Department.
90. Continue to work with the County Administrative Office to develop an acceptable alternative for providing office space relief for the Department, and interview rooms for the Intake Section and the Social Services Division.
91. In conjunction with the County Administrative Office, complete the current review of the phone system to ensure that an acceptable system is utilized.
92. The County Administrative Office should study and evaluate the need for a County policy on replacement of office equipment.

SECTION VIII - OPERATING PROCEDURES

37. MICROFILM PROJECT

FINDING SUMMARY

The Welfare Department's microfilm project has been extremely effective in reducing the space needed to store records. The cost to microfilm, however, is considerably greater than the cost to alternatively provide storage space for records retention in the original paper media. Microfilming of active records has greatly facilitated handling and management of cases due to their reduced size, resulting in psychological as well as a physical benefit to Eligibility Workers. However, workers have complained about the legibility of microfilmed documents.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Problem and the Program

A microfilm feasibility study was completed by the Welfare Department in March, 1975. The study outlined the problems the Department was experiencing with its current record system and how, by converting to a microfilm system, the problems would be minimized.

Briefly, these problems were:

1. Critical financial records stored in areas that are inaccessible or unsuited for storage, with no provision for document security.
2. Record volume growth beyond the capacity of the Department's facilities.
3. Reduced accessibility and retrieval of case record information as a result of these failures of the existing system.

The program proposed to effect an annual savings of \$16,832 in Record Room salaries, \$110,926 in professional staff and \$8,301 in clerical staff after conversion of active case documents was completed. These savings would occur as a result of improved efficiency and productivity of staff in document storage and retrieval.

The savings was to be accomplished by controlling the growth of files in the active cases through microfilming a portion of the active section of the current eligibility files, thereby reducing the size of each case folder. As filmed active cases become inactive and inactive paper media cases destroyed at the end of their retention period, substantial reductions in storage space would occur for inactive cases as well. In addition, computer input documents would be microfilmed to further reduce storage space requirements. Closed (inactive) cases would only be filmed if reactivated.

The material for the active case file to be microfilmed is sorted into four categories and designated as: (1) financial; (2) eligibility; (3) miscellaneous; and (4) conversion block. As material is microfilmed, each microrecord is added to a designated microfiche jacket for each category. The jackets are placed in the master file and a diazo (duplicate) copy is made of the financial jacket and forwarded to the worker (copies of other jackets are made for the worker upon request).

Table I shows the progress of the microfilm conversion project in terms of documents microfilmed and the projected number of documents remaining to be microfilmed.

TABLE I
DOCUMENT PROCESSING

<u>Category</u>	<u>Projected Number of Documents to be Filmed</u>	<u>Documents Filmed as of 8-31-77</u>	<u>Remaining Documents to be Filmed</u>	<u>Retention Period for Original Document</u>
1. Active case folders	12,931,000	8,625,000	4,306,000	6 years after transfer to inactive status
2. Inactive records projected to be re-activated	8,524,800	150,000	8,374,800	6 years
TOTAL	21,455,800	8,775,000	12,680,800	

Of the projected total 21,455,800 documents to be microfilmed, 8,775,000 have been completed (40.9%).

The major thrust of the program has been to microfilm active case folders and the update material being added to them on a continuing basis. Of the 12.9 million existing documents projected for microfilming, 8.6 million (67%) have been completed, leaving 4.3 million yet to be filmed.

The Department only recently completed the conversion of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Ongoing cases to microfilm, and in October, 1977, started the conversion of the Medi-Cal, Foodstamps, General Relief (MFG) Ongoing cases.

The average time an AFDC case is active is two and one half years. When a case is closed, it must legally be retained for a five year period (Section 10851, Welfare and Institution Code). The average time a document is retained, however, is realistically six years by the time approval to destroy them has been obtained from the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP).

Only 150,000 inactive case documents have been microfilmed. Inactive cases are filmed unless reactivated. Assuming a 40% reactivation rate of 60,892 inactive cases (21,312,000 documents), 8,374,800 more inactive documents will be microfilmed.

In addition to the conversion of existing documents there is the ongoing microfilming of new documents added to active cases. Approximately 200,000 documents monthly will comprise the maintenance and updating workload once all active cases are converted to microfilm. At the current level of conversion the monthly rate is approximately 140,000 per month. There is also the ongoing daily microfilming of computer input and output documents which numbers approximately 40,800 monthly.

The Welfare Department has operated the microfilm program and parts of the former system simultaneously. The major portion of the microfilm program staff (13 positions) were originally Record Room staff for the old system. Six extra-help positions were added to the program in March, 1976. An additional extra-help position was added to the budget on July 1, 1977.

To date, the microfilm conversion costs have totaled \$189,900 excluding equipment. This results in an approximate cost of \$.02 per document. The total cost to finish conversion of active files is expected to reach \$229,250. Upon completion of converting active cases to microfilm, filming of newly generated documents to add to active files will cost approximately \$4,000 monthly and computer input and output documents \$800 monthly.

Microfilm System Appraisal

The microfilm project has accomplished several positive effects since its inception.

- The actual size of active cases converted to microfilm have been reduced, making it easier for the worker to handle and easier for Record Room staff to file when the case is closed.
- The space required to house active files has been reduced approximately 5,000 linear feet. This has resulted in a reduction of approximately 2,500 square feet of floor space in the Eligibility Workers' immediate work area. The amount of space recovered by the reduction has an equivalent value of \$12,000 per year when computed at \$.40 per square foot per month.
- Copies of microfilmed records have been made available for simultaneous use by the Quality Control Section of SDBP and departmental supervisory personnel.
- Retrieval time of inactive records has been improved. The smaller, microfilmed files are easier and quicker to locate than records stored in the former upright paper media file system.

We interviewed employees that regularly use microfilmed records from the Intake, AFDC Ongoing and Case Review sections, and other employees through out the Department that used the system occasionally. The reactions we received were mixed; some employees disliked it, some tolerated it, and some liked the system.

The positive comments from users were:

- Cases are easier to physically handle after documents are microfilmed.
- Time is saved in filing material in the smaller case folder.
- The smaller case files now occupy less storage space than the larger pre-microfilmed cases.
- Case material is very convenient to locate.
- Documents are harder to locate in the case not microfilmed because of the volume of documents that must be searched.

Negative comments were:

- Sometimes documents are in the wrong jacket.
- It takes too long to receive new jackets when update material is sent to be microfilmed.
- Using the viewer is eye fatiguing if used for lengthy periods of time.

- It is difficult to find the time to assemble paper, update material for filming when it should be done, and it takes too much of the Eligibility Worker's time.
- It is very difficult to find documents in the folder (when you transfer to another unit) if all workers do not keep update filming current.
- Microfilm images are hard to read.
- It takes longer to work a case when you have to search film for documents.
- Documents are out of sequence in the microfilm jackets, making it hard to locate material on film.
- It takes too long to retrieve recently closed files sent to be microfilmed when they are needed to reopen the case.

The State Department of Benefit Payments IRIS Team, during the audit exit conference on September 6, 1977, reported that the poor quality of microfilmed records could result in problems with the Fair Hearing Officer not being able to read a case.

The Welfare Department is cognizant of the complaints of workers and has taken some measures to improve the image quality of the microrecords. These measures have included adjusting the filming procedure to avoid wide variances in film density, and more time and extra care in document preparation before microfilming. The Department has also initiated a new microfilm summary form that is placed in the case file to catalog the documents that have been microfilmed. Also, an additional rotary file was requested and allocated in the Welfare Department budget for fiscal year 1977-78 to improve microfiche retrieval.

Storage of original paper media records is still the prevailing form of records retention since the Department concentrates its microfilm efforts on active cases only, and remaining inactive case documents total approximately 21,320,000.

Eligibility Workers complained to the Forms and Procedures Committee about the legibility of records on microfilm. They requested and received approval to retain the narrative documents of active cases in paper form for one year before microfilming as a partial solution to the problem.

Economic Analysis of the Microfilm Program

For purposes of economic analysis, we have assumed that two linear feet of documents may be stored in one square foot of

space when stacking and aisle space is considered. When we compare cost of storage versus microfilm for two cubic feet of documents (5,600 documents) the cost for microfilming (@ \$.02 per document) is \$112.00; the cost to store two linear feet of documents in cartons (@ \$.40 a square foot per month space rental) for eight years would be \$38.40, or \$.0069 per document. Direct costs of microfilming are therefore about three times that of paper media storage.

Table II applies these unit cost differences to the estimated number of documents to be filmed to develop comparative overall costs of microfilming and paper media storage.

TABLE II

COMPARATIVE TOTAL COST OF CONVERSION OF MICROFILMING VS.
CONTINUED PAPER MEDIA STORAGE

	<u>Remaining Number of Documents</u>	<u>Cost of Microfilm</u>	<u>Record Life Storage Cost*</u>	<u>Potential Savings</u>
Active documents	4,306,000	\$86,120	\$29,527	\$56,593
Inactive documents projected to be reactivated	8,374,800	\$167,496	\$57,427	\$110,069
TOTAL	12,680,800	\$253,616	\$86,954	\$166,662

*Eight year storage cost for active cases and inactive cases expected to be reactivated into active cases.

It is not entirely adequate or accurate to compare the total record storage cost of microfilming to the total cost of paper media storage in an archive as the real economic difference between the two alternatives. This is because the costs of the microfilming alternative are incurred immediately at the time the records are filmed. The cost of the archive alternative is spread over the life of the record (retention period) in the form of periodic lease payments for the space. This is a deferral of costs into future years which would permit an alternative investment of total costs until the future years' lease payments are due. For instance, at an

assumed interest rate of 8% per annum, you would have to invest 68¢ today to pay a future liability of \$1.00 in five years; 73.5¢ to pay a future liability of \$1.00 in four years; 79.4¢ for three years; 85.7¢ in two years; and 92.6¢ in one year. This is another way of saying money has a time value dimension.

To compare the real economic cost of the two alternatives, microfilming and paper media storage in an archive, you must determine the "present value" of each. This is done by determining the amount of funds you would set aside today, at a given interest rate, to meet any future year liabilities of either alternative. This is called present value analysis.

The total cost of microfilming of .02¢ per document is also a present value since it is incurred at the time a record is filmed. The present value of storage in the original paper media in the archive alternative is determined by computing the present value of the future years' stream of lease payments. When this is done, the annual cost of an archive alternative of .08¢ per year leased space cost per document adds to a total cost of .69¢ over its eight year life (active records). However, the present value of that series of .08¢ payments is actually .494¢. Therefore, present value analysis of these alternatives indicates microfilming (.02¢ per document) is four times as expensive as archive storage (.494¢) in real economic costs. The following table depicts the comparative costs of microfilming to the cost of the paper storage document, using present value analysis.

TABLE III

COMPARATIVE COST PER DOCUMENT OF MICROFILMING VS. PAPER
STORAGE USING PRESENT VALUE ANALYSIS

Years	Annual Expenditure		
	Microfilm	Storage	Variance
1	2.000¢	.086¢	+1.914¢
2	--	.086¢	-.086¢
3	--	.086¢	-.086¢
4	--	.086¢	-.086¢
5	--	.086¢	-.086¢
6	--	.086¢	-.086¢
7	--	.086¢	-.086¢
8	--	.086¢	-.086¢
TOTAL	2.000¢	.688¢	1.312¢
PRESENT VALUE PER DOCUMENT	2.000¢	.494¢	1.506¢

Table IV below applies present value analysis to comparative costs of microfilm conversion versus paper storage as shown previously in Table II.

TABLE IV

ECONOMIC COST OF MICROFILM VS. STORAGE OF
EXISTING DOCUMENTS

	<u>Remaining Number of Documents</u>	<u>Present Value Cost of Microfilm</u>	<u>Present Value Storage Cost</u>	<u>Present Value Savings</u>
Active documents	4,306,000	\$86,120	\$21,272	\$64,848
Inactive documents to be reactivated	<u>8,374,800</u>	<u>\$167,496</u>	<u>\$41,371</u>	<u>\$126,125</u>
TOTAL	12,680,800	\$253,616	\$62,643	\$190,973

The ongoing microfilming of new documents added to active cases for maintenance purposes as well as the daily microfilming of computer input and output documents is also greater when compared to storage costs using present value analysis as shown in Table V.

TABLE V

ECONOMIC COSTS OF MICROFILMING NEW DOCUMENTS VS. STORAGE

	<u>Documents Per Year</u>	<u>Cost of Microfilm</u>	<u>Total Cost of Storage</u>	<u>Total Cost Savings</u>	<u>Present Value Cost of Storage</u>	<u>Present Value Savings</u>
Active File Documents	2,400,000	\$48,000	\$16,512	\$31,488	\$11,856	\$36,144
Computer Input/ Output Documents	<u>489,636</u>	<u>\$9,793</u>	<u>\$2,526</u>	<u>\$7,267</u>	<u>\$1,944</u>	<u>\$7,811</u>
TOTAL	2,889,636	\$57,793	\$19,038	\$38,755	\$13,800	\$43,955

CRITERIA

The microfilm program should be cost effective.

The microfilm program should reduce the area needed to store records.

The microfilm program should enhance retrieval and processing of active records, and retrieval of closed cases.

Microfilming of records should not delay processing of active cases.

The microfilmed images of documents should be legible and in sequential order.

EFFECT

Microfilming documents with retention periods of five to eight years is not cost effective.

The ongoing microfilming of new additional active case documents and computer input and report documents for storage purposes is costing the taxpayer quadruple the amount required for storage of the paper documents (see Table V),

Microfilming of current and inactive records has reduced the overall space needed to house records by approximately 2,500 square feet, and has arrested record storage space growth.

Worker acceptance ranges from very poor to good.

There are still serious record accessibility, retrieval and legibility problems associated with the microfilm program, as well as the residual upright paper filing system for inactive records, as presently organized and operating.

CAUSE

Welfare Department microfilm staff state that unexpected set backs, greater volume of ongoing documents than anticipated, and more documents requiring filming on both sides are the reasons for the lagging schedule.

Older documents written in pencil, different color inks and paper, some computer printed documents, and poor handwriting contribute to poor microfilm image readability.

A system was not set up at the start of the microfilm system to statistically monitor the progress of the system so that management could evaluate the economics of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

93. The Welfare Department should establish a records archive to store inactive and computer documents off-site.
94. In light of serious economic disadvantages and quality criticisms of the microfilming system, the Department should reassess the feasibility of retaining active records in paper media as opposed to the use of microfilm.

38. EMERGENCY AID

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The granting of immediate need aid pending eligibility determination is inappropriate. The Department grants pending aid inconsistently under pressure from Central La Familia and fraud may be occurring.

FINDING SUMMARY

The granting of aid in the form of a check payable to the client pending an applicant's eligibility determination is provided by regulation in pending Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cases only. The Department grants aid up to \$100 under the AFDC Immediate Need Program in a reasonably consistent manner when the incidence of denial is compared to denials of regular AFDC applications. Under the General Relief (GR) Program, emergency aid in the form of a rent guarantee, utility guarantee, or grocery order may be granted to needy persons. Those applicants who provide possibly fraudulent information are referred to the District Attorney for investigation before aid is granted. If found to be unqualified, aid is denied or terminated if already granted on an emergency basis (aid payments once made are rarely recoverable).

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Immediate need aid must be granted to families apparently eligible under the AFDC program. This aid in the form of a check payable to the recipient is available only for qualified AFDC applicants and only up to a maximum of \$100 per case. This assistance program is mandated as part of the Federal and State welfare program and assistance is granted based upon a presumption of eligibility of the client from his/her statement of facts prior to verification. If clients appear to be eligible because of their statements, the aid is given and the clients' actual eligibility is verified after the initial interview. Detecting possible fraud before granting immediate need is difficult because it must be based on such things as inconsistent statements from the client, etc., without benefit of documentation. In most instances of suspected fraud which were referred to the District Attorney, the clients were simply not heard from again after receiving their immediate need check.

During a one year period from May 1, 1976 to April 30, 1977, there were 397 immediate need requests. Of these requests and pending applications from previous months, 388 were granted totalling approximately \$36,245. Subsequent denial

of aid because of ineligibility determined from verification procedures occurred in 37 or 9.5% of the cases. In 97% or 36 of these cases, there was suspected fraud on the part of the applicants (9.3% of all immediate need grants).

Persons with emergency needs, but who do not qualify as AFDC applicants, may be eligible for emergency aid under the County's General Relief Program. This includes persons or families whose need is temporary pending receipt of other income and whose GR or AFDC application is pending. This aid is in the form of a rent guarantee, utility guarantee, or grocery order. Recipients can receive GR emergency aid or AFDC immediate need aid, but not both.

During a six month period from March, 1977 through August, 1977, GR emergency aid, pending eligibility determination, was granted for 135 cases for grocery orders totaling \$2632; 45 cases for rent guarantees actually paid totaling \$2161; and 8 cases were utility guarantees actually paid totaling \$211. These are cases where vouchers were actually paid by the Welfare Department. There were other instances where the Department guaranteed payment with the expectation that if the client had other income, or received an AFDC grant, he would pay the expense himself from those funds. It was not possible to determine the number of guarantees issued, how many were later paid by the Department, or the number of cases of emergency aid later determined to be ineligible. The current method of compiling statistical information does not provide these figures. The above cases were tabulated manually for a limited period of time.

A special study of AFDC applications conducted by the Welfare Department Intake Section illustrates the incidence of fraud. This study included applications taken from April 1, 1976 to September 30, 1976 in which there was a referral to the Family Support Division of the District Attorney's Office for review. This also included AFDC immediate need cases where there was suspected fraud. The following chart shows the percentage of applications referred (AFDC) for possible fraud.

AFDC CASES REFERRED TO DISTRICT ATTORNEY

	Number Applications	Number Referred	Percent Referred	Number Denied	Percentage of Apps. Denied as Result of Investigating
April	614	94	15.30	50	8.14
May	620	104	16.74	64	10.32
June	704	108	15.34	58	8.23
July	705	112	15.88	58	8.22
August	786	118	15.01	61	7.76
Sept.	746	92	12.33	47	6.30
TOTAL	4,175	628	15.04	338	8.09

As shown in the column on the right, the percentage of applications denied as a result of investigation ranged from 6.3% to 10.3% for April through September of 1976. The average was 8.9%. This is slightly lower than the 9.5% of approved immediate need cases subsequently denied for AFDC.

Centro La Familia, a welfare rights organization, does assist clients in applying for aid. It is their role to help the client to understand benefits and assist them in receiving the maximum in benefits to which the applicant is entitled under the law.

Employees could not cite specific instances of inappropriate granting of aid to clients during employee interviews. There was, however, a general feeling among employees we interviewed that clients who demanded the most attention received preferential treatment in priority processing of their application, or interpreting welfare regulations more in the client's favor where circumstances were not clearly applicable to regulations.

CRITERIA

The Intake Section should properly screen AFDC immediate need and GR emergency aid applicants to ensure eligibles are granted the correct aid and ineligibles are denied. Aid should be granted consistently within prescribed regulations. Suspected fraud cases should be investigated initially by Intake staff and if found questionable, referred to the Family Support Division of the District Attorney's Office for further investigation.

The Department should provide an effective control mechanism over the granting of emergency aid, and have a monitoring system to detect development of problems.

EFFECT

The processing of applications for immediate need aid is performed in a reasonable and consistent manner when the percentage of cases suspected of being fraudulent is compared to the incidence of AFDC aid denials by the Family Support Division. The percentage of suspected fraud cases denied for immediate need is approximately the same as the percentage denied for all AFDC applicants referred to the Special Investigative Unit.

There is insufficient information available to conclusively determine the total incidence of fraud in immediate need and emergency aid cases.

CAUSE

Intake staff must grant immediate need or emergency aid if the unverified facts presented by the client indicate he/she is eligible. Because of the high total number of immediate need and regular AFDC applications, more thorough case reviews are only conducted on those cases most suspected of being fraudulent.

Opportunity for department control over disbursement of immediate need funds is minimal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

95. The Department should continue to screen applicants in a reasonable manner as prescribed by program regulations and strive to maintain a consistent application of regulations to all cases.
96. The Auditor-Controller should include the General Relief Emergency Aid Program in the scope of his next audit of the Welfare Department.

39. MINIMIZING DISRUPTIVE REGULATORY CHANGES

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Director should work with the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) to reduce State and Federal regulatory changes which disrupt local welfare administration.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Welfare Directors Association is active in taking positions on pending Federal and State welfare legislation, and should continue working to resolve conflicts of interpretation of regulations between counties.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The CWDA was organized in 1926 at a meeting held in Pasadena in conjunction with the annual meeting of the California Conference of Social Work. The name of the organization was changed from California Conference of Social Work to California Welfare Directors Association in December, 1943.

The Association is a voluntary organization composed of Welfare Directors, Assistant Directors and sponsored members. Most of the work of the Association is carried out through committees to which members are assigned, such as:

- AFDC Eligibility and Grant
- Adoptions and Foster Care
- Adult Eligibility and Grant
- Executive Committee
- Fiscal Committee
- Foodstamp Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Medical Care Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Social Services Committee
- Research and Statistics Committee

Fresno County Welfare Department administrators have been active participants in Adult Eligibility and Grant, Fiscal, and Social Services committees in recent years.

The committees review and endorse or oppose pending Welfare legislation; draft proposed regulations to change or augment current welfare regulations; and submit proposals for new welfare regulations. Some recent examples of legislative and regulatory activities of the CWDA are:

- A. 9-24-76 - The American Public Welfare Association, with which CWDA is affiliated, expressed opposition to Congress on sections of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) proposals presented to the Senate Finance Committee on public assistance, withholding, and child support.
- B. 10-5-76 - Affirmative response requesting the Department of Health to have regulations drafted to permit counties to use the declaration method of eligibility determination for social services on an emergency basis.
- C. 10-8-76 - Response to request of Director, State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP), regarding policy issues, program issues, and suggestions on the general assistance program.
- D. 3-16-77 - CWDA presented position on the social service allocation formula to increase the State's allocation for counties of Title XX funds from \$130 million (76/77) to \$142 million (77/78).

The objectives of the Association were revised September 16, 1976, and now officially support the County Supervisors Association as well as define the working relationship with the State Department of Health and other State agencies. The objectives are:

- 1. To stimulate effective relationships and helpful cooperation between county welfare departments and the State of California.
- 2. To act as a forum for the sharing of knowledge and information among members of the Association.
- 3. To develop mutual understanding and interpretation of the existing California laws pertaining to public assistance and welfare programs.
- 4. To establish and maintain effective communication with the SDBP, the State Department of Health and other State agencies.
 - a. To advise them of the impact of their policies on county welfare departments.
 - b. To promote a system of public welfare that helps persons in need, that encourages them to obtain their full potential, and that is responsive to society.

5. In cooperation with the County Supervisors Association of California, to actively support the passage of legislative measures, rules and regulations which further the improvement of welfare programs and the administration of public welfare in California.

The Association has defined one of its objectives as: "To stimulate effective relationships and helpful cooperation between county welfare departments in the State of California. To work out agreements and programs for the efficient and just handling of matters of intercounty transportation, residential placing, etc."

We discussed different interpretations of welfare regulations among counties with Welfare Department staff. Normally when employees encounter difficulties with other counties, they attempt to resolve the issue by working through their supervisors, and complain about the difficulties they have experienced.

Two examples of cases involving intercounty transfers where the original county disclaimed any fiscal responsibility were finally resolved when:

1. The SDBP instructed the other county to pay the full 30 day cost instead of 14 days for foster home emergency placement.
2. Approval was obtained by the Welfare Administrative Supervisor III to pay the foster home cost for emergency care for three children out of Fresno County funds.

Each case is considered a special problem, and despite many attempts by CWDA to collectively resolve these different interpretations by different counties, problems still exist. It is the responsibility of the SDBP as the regulatory body to revise and issue intercounty transfer regulations to resolve these conflicts. Since the Association is used by SDBP as a consultant body, the CWDA can influence SDBP efforts to bring about clarifications in intercounty transfer regulations.

Most of the Welfare Department staff, while they are aware of the CWDA, are not cognizant of the efforts being made by the Association or the impact the Association has had in affecting welfare legislation and regulations.

There is also the American Public Welfare Association that attempts to impact the welfare regulations on a Federal level.

CRITERIA

The Welfare Director should encourage the CWDA to be responsive to problems with current welfare regulations experienced by

workers and attempt to affect changes in SDBP regulations including those for intercounty transfers that will minimize or eliminate these administrative problems.

The Director should work with the CWDA to accomplish its goals where they compliment Fresno County interests.

EFFECT

The Association is an active force in affecting welfare regulations, especially within the State of California.

Intercounty transfer case regulations are interpreted differently by some counties which results in an unfair financial burden on the county where the client has moved.

CAUSE

Through the years, the CWDA has been actively involved and effective in recommending proposals to SDBP to affect changes in Federal and State regulations.

Intercounty transfers involving financial outlays can develop into problems when other counties dispute their financial responsibility for a case before all transfer requirements are met.

RECOMMENDATIONS

97. The Welfare Director should circulate Association minutes to administrative staff to alert them to impending changes in welfare regulations and the position the Association has taken.
98. The Welfare Department staff from Eligibility Supervisor and above should be encouraged to submit to the Welfare Director, through proper channels, comments and suggestions on current welfare regulations that should be considered by the CWDA for recommending change to SDBP.
99. All Welfare Department staff should be encouraged to report through the proper channels all incidents of conflict in interpretation of regulations experienced in processing intercounty welfare recipient transfers so that the Director may present the kinds of problems that still exist between counties and CWDA can continue working with SDBP to be more precise in its intercounty transfer regulations.

40. HOME CALLS POLICY

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Department's policy on making home calls to applicant residences to verify eligibility, particularly the provision that workers in Intake make home calls on their own cases, was arbitrarily imposed and is inconsistently administered.

FINDING SUMMARY

The policy for determining when to make home calls to interview clients, although written in a general outline, is left up to the individual worker to decide when the situation warrants making a home call. The requirement that workers make their own home calls applies only to the Intake Section.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The procedure on home visits as written in the State Department of Benefit Payments' (SDBP) Procedural Manual, Section 40-161, is:

"Home visit prior to approval of aid and prior to completion of periodic redetermination of eligibility is required when living arrangements or other factors affecting eligibility, or apparent eligibility in cases of immediate need, cannot be satisfactorily determined without such a visit."

The above paragraph is the opening statement of the Welfare Department Administrative Directive #33 on home call policy. The directive includes, but is not limited to, four situations where home calls should be conducted.

1. Where there is a report of, or reasonable suspicion of fraud.
2. Where there is a possibility the absent parent or an unreported, unrelated adult male may be in the home.
3. Where there is reason to believe that the children may not be in the home or that they may not be attending school.
4. Where there is reason to believe a parent or an adult child may be employed and not reporting income.

The implementation of this policy differs between the Ongoing and Intake Sections. In the Ongoing Section, workers make their own home calls and may make home calls for other workers in the Section. The Welfare Administrative Supervisor III (WAS III) in charge of the Intake Section states that each Eligibility Worker in Intake is required to make their own home calls within the City. In outlying areas, workers may make other workers' home calls.

The reasons given for having each worker make their own home calls are that:

- they have had experience where one worker making another worker's call interviewed a person posing as the client;
- clients become apprehensive when several workers are handling their case.

Some Intake Eligibility Workers we interviewed, however, stated that on occasion they make home calls for other workers within the City.

The written procedure on home calls gives general guidelines, but workers are expected to use their own judgment to decide when and how often to make home calls. A review of mileage claims for March, April and May, 1977 of all 16 units in Intake shows that of the 110 Eligibility Workers assigned to those units, 82, or 74.5%, made home calls during that period. In eight of the units all employees made home calls. In four units, 80% of the Eligibility Workers made home calls. In four units, only two of the Eligibility Workers, or 33%, in each of the units made home calls.

When the Eligibility Worker is unable to reconcile conflicting information where fraud is detected or suspected, the case should be referred to the Family Support Division's (FSD) Special Investigative Unit (SIU).

The SDBP Manual, Section 20.007.33, states that the SIU shall:

"Conduct all investigations in compliance with due process of law so as not to infringe the constitutional rights of applicants and recipients. Home visits for the purpose of investigation may be made during reasonable hours of normal family activity."

Some workers in the Intake Section refer Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cases to SIU and do not make home calls. Some, both refer cases to SIU and then proceed to make home calls, and others follow the procedure and make home calls first before referring a case to SIU where conflicts in information persist. The departmental procedural guide, item 27, Fraud Referral Procedure, does not address the issue

of home calls at all. Consequently, home calls may be made by the SIU investigator and/or the Eligibility Worker, or by neither one. In a recent memorandum to the Assistant Director of Eligibility, the Intake WAS III stated:

"This (practice) results in a number of unnecessary fraud referrals. In the six months study of fraud referrals we made in 1976, it was found that FSD dropped the investigation on 162 out of 635 cases (including routine FSD interviews of absent parent AFDC applicants) without taking any action because the worker had either allowed or denied the case before they started their investigation. That is 25.5% of the referrals. Most of these dispositions were made as a result of the worker finally making a home call; the worker was able to either verify the suspicion and denied aid, or was able to clear it up and allowed aid without the fraud investigation being made. If the home call had been made prior to the referral, it need not have been made at all, which would be in conformity with regulations. It would also have made it possible to act on the application sooner."

There is no Federal or State subvention for SIU personnel, while Eligibility Worker salaries are 75% revenue offset.

A monthly average of 830 AFDC applications, all categories, were processed in the Intake Section during March, April and May, 1977. All applications in the category of AFDC-Absent Parent, where the absence of the parent is not legally verified, are routinely routed to FSD for child support interviews by a Family Support Officer. During the months of April, May and June, a monthly average of 171 pre-eligibility referrals were accepted by the SIU for investigation. The Family Support Officers initiated 77%, or 131, of the pre-eligibility cases for investigation as a result of their interviews. The Intake Eligibility Workers referred 23%, or 40, of the cases for investigation during the same period. The referrals to SIU initiated by the Eligibility Workers is equivalent to an average of 4.8% of the total AFDC applications processed monthly.

The majority of welfare cases investigated by SIU are ongoing AFDC cases. A monthly average of 199, or approximately 27%, of the AFDC annual redetermination cases processed by the Ongoing Section were referred during the months of April, May and June, 1977. Most of the cases referred from the Ongoing Section do not require home calls as other aspects of fraud are suspected such as unreported income and overpayments.

Until November 1, 1976, State regulations (SDBP Manual, Section 20.006) prohibited the Department from seeking clarification from the client when fraud was suspected so

that the client would not be alerted to conceal information from the investigators or be coached as to how to respond to SIU inquiries. Although this restriction has been removed, the fact a fraud referral has been made and the nature of the conflicting information which generated it is generally not shared with the client by the Eligibility Workers. Once the decision to make a fraud referral is reached, the client has no further opportunity to provide clarification the County needs because they are unaware a question is unresolved.

Some clients, through the services of advocacy groups, have been able to discover that their eligibility determination is being delayed because of an investigation by going to Department management. Usually, however, the client will not discover there has been an investigation unless they question a delay or file an appeal of denial with SDBP and the County uses investigation findings as the basis for its action.

Some employees interviewed commented on the fear they experienced in making home calls in some neighborhoods.

According to the WAS II in Intake, during peak workload periods the number of home calls Eligibility Workers make is reduced because the increased number of applications each worker has to process requires more of their time be spent in the office.

CRITERIA

The policy for making home calls should be clearly defined.

Home calls should be made whenever eligibility cannot be accurately determined, or whenever grant or eligibility questions cannot be resolved from the office.

Adjustments in priorities and scheduling casework completion should be made so that the necessary home calls can be made in a timely fashion to prevent delay in case processing or eligibility determination.

Eligibility Workers should make reasonable efforts to clear up any questions they have about client eligibility and explain the consequences of fraud or misstatements before a case is referred to SIU.

EFFECT

Workers failing to make home calls, or to make home calls in a timely manner, can delay case processing and also be the subject of complaints from clients because of the length of time taken to approve or deny aid.

The Welfare Department's credibility suffers when advocacy groups or authorized representatives of applicants can discover that their client's case is being investigated and the worker has not discussed this fact with the client.

The low rate of home calls in some units suggests not all questions of eligibility are resolved before some cases are approved or denied, or raises the question whether many home calls currently being made are really necessary.

Some Intake workers not making home calls prior to referring cases to the Family Support Division's SIU could be a contributing factor to the 56.9% of cases investigated by SIU subsequently being approved for aid.

The policy of requiring each worker to make their own home calls is not being consistently enforced.

During workload peaks, processing applications within the prescribed 45 day limit takes priority over making home calls that it would otherwise be prudent to make.

CAUSE

The criteria for making home calls is clearly defined. However, in using their own discretion, workers may decide that a home call is rarely or frequently necessary, or that the Family Support Division's SIU can make the investigation to determine eligibility when information is contradictory. This would suggest that there is insufficient management control over administration of the home call policy.

Many cases referred to SIU for investigation could probably be resolved by the Eligibility Worker if home calls were always made prior to the referral.

RECOMMENDATIONS

100. Welfare administration should establish a department-wide policy on whether each Eligibility Worker is responsible for making home calls on their own cases, and should be prepared to enforce it; or assign the responsibility of making home calls on aid program applicants or clients to a specialized unit, or specialized workers within units.
101. Each Intake Unit supervisor, as part of regular case supervision, should evaluate the need for home calls and make certain home calls are conducted where appropriate.

102. The Welfare Department should study whether pre-eligibility investigation by the SIU can be avoided if the Eligibility Worker or special home call unit is required to make a home call before making a fraud referral. In situations where an Eligibility Worker home call would not resolve a question such as whether there is a suspected unreported savings account or the client is working, and an SIU investigation is therefore still necessary, the Welfare Director and District Attorney should try to coordinate Eligibility Worker home visits with the Family Support Division's SIU to reduce duplication of effort.
103. The Welfare Department should re-evaluate its security policy of not sharing with the client that his/her case has been referred to SIU for investigation of possible fraud unless the client inquires. The Eligibility Worker should inform the client of impending action so that any misunderstanding the client may have about their responsibilities for misstating or not reporting relevant facts is clearly understood and more likely averted.

41. SECURITY COVERAGE

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There is inadequate security coverage of the Welfare complex.

FINDING SUMMARY

Security coverage for the Welfare complex could be made more effective by modifying the guard's assignments to place him in areas of greatest need more frequently.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The first security guard was employed by the Welfare Department on April 13, 1973. The duties outlined at that time and those performed by the present security guard are the same, except he no longer patrols parking lots. The duties of the Welfare security guard that have remained relatively unchanged are:

- Fire checks and internal security - walking through each building in the Welfare complex at least twice daily.

-- Respond to calls from any area within the complex via beeper.

-- Crowd control.

On March 28, 1977, the Board of Supervisors approved the reassignment of the responsibility for patrolling the parking area in the Kings Canyon complex to the Public Works Department. The guards assigned to internal security remained with the respective departments of the Valley Medical Center and the Welfare Department.

The security guard is assigned to the Welfare Business Management Section and works with little direct supervision. The assigned duties are very general and do not require the guard to report on his activities or incidents to which he has responded. He works from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Since the recent division in parking and internal security guard supervision, coverage for sick and vacation time off is no longer provided by the Valley Medical Center security force.

When an incident occurs or a situation develops where the services of the security guard are required, the worker contacts the security guard by dialing a telephone number that activates the guard's beeper. The caller has 12 seconds to recite the message to the guard into the telephone to give the location of the incident where the guard is needed. That message is relayed directly to the guard's beeper equipment which is a radio receiver.

Although no records of incidents were maintained until recently, the guard states he responds to approximately two or three calls per week. He feels that because of walking through the major client areas several times a day, his presence acts as a deterrent to some situations. He states most of the calls received are from: 1) the Intake Section; 2) The MFG Section; and 3) the AFDC Ongoing Section -- in that order.

Staff we have interviewed expressed concern that when the security guard is needed, he is often not available because of the large area to be patrolled. By the time he responds, the situation no longer exists. The security guard concurs and states that sometimes when calls are received, he is involved in another situation and cannot respond.

Staff also feel that training in handling crisis situations would be beneficial for them in minimizing worker/client conflicts.

During the study, we explored the possibility of reassigning the security guard to another department with more experience in administering these security type functions. This may be

desirable because of the supervision, legal and training complexities of this function. However, no department was found that is prepared at this time to take on this added responsibility. This issue will be readdressed when our office undertakes a planned County security study within the next year.

CRITERIA

The security guard should be available when needed. He should be able to respond to a situation call promptly.

Welfare employees should be able to depend on the security guard to respond to their request for assistance when a client becomes abusive or threatening.

The need for a security guard is sporadic, but staff should be aware of a regular patrol schedule. When the staff are aware that the security guard should be patrolling the area shortly, this knowledge may assist the worker in dealing with a problem client.

An incident log should be maintained to assist the Department in managing the assignments and training of the guard.

The security guard should work under supervision that can account for his activities and provide additional security coverage when needed.

The responsibilities of the security guard should be clearly defined.

EFFECT

The security guard is not always available when needed, and could be better situated to be in the right place at the right time.

There are no provisions for coverage when the security guard is sick or on vacation.

During our study, Welfare management could not account for the activities of the security guard, nor evaluate his performance on other than an exception basis.

CAUSE

All staff are not routinely trained in how to handle a problem client. They may be a contributing factor in situations requiring the assistance of the security guard.

Routine assignments and patrols of the security guard limit his accessibility and lengthen the time it takes him to reach an incident. This hampers the effectiveness of the guard in responding to calls for assistance which are his primary mission.

As long as calls for assistance were answered, fire patrols were made and no complaints were received from staff, there was infrequent contact between the security guard and his immediate supervisor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

104. The duties of the Welfare security guard should be modified to eliminate the fire patrol of each Welfare building of the Kings Canyon complex, and concentrate on patrolling the Intake, MFG, and Ongoing Sections on a regularly scheduled route where problems are most likely to occur. Coverage of others areas of the Welfare complex would be on an on-call basis.
105. An incident log should be maintained to document the frequency and location of need and the type of situations requiring the assistance of a security guard. This information should be evaluated periodically by management to determine whether further adjustments in the guard assignments and training are necessary.
106. The training program for Welfare Department supervisors and staff should include contingency planning and orientation on handling minor disruptive or threatening behavior of clients.

42. BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Department needs guidelines on who to call when there are bomb threats, and better cooperation with responding agencies in dealing with emergencies. On one occasion the Grand Jury observed an evacuation of the main Welfare building because of a bomb threat and the Sheriff's bomb squad did not respond during the first 45 minutes while the Grand Jury was there observing.

FINDING SUMMARY

General bomb threat procedures were issued by the former Welfare Director, but they need to be augmented with specific plans.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

On July 16, 1976, the Safety Coordinator from the Personnel Management Division issued general instructions and a Sheriff's checklist to all County departments to be used as a guideline in case of a bomb threat call.

The Welfare Director, on July 21, 1976, issued a memorandum designating key persons as building coordinators to be notified in each building, and general instructions for personnel in the Welfare complex. Attached to the notice were the instructions from the Personnel Management Division and the Sheriff's checklist. A revised Sheriff's checklist was issued in June, 1977.

It is assumed (as stated in the notice) that the bomb threat call will be received at the main switchboard. The switchboard operator has the responsibility for notifying each of the building coordinators and the Sheriff's Department. A preliminary decision will be made by the Sheriff's Department and the Director of the Welfare Department, based on the information received, whether to evacuate the building. If the decision is made to evacuate the building, the building coordinators are responsible for the prompt and orderly evacuation of each building. All personnel are to be instructed to remain at a safe distance from the building until the switchboard operator is alerted by the Sheriff's Department that an all clear signal can be given.

If the call is received by a worker, they should follow the Sheriff's bomb threat call check list provided by the Sheriff's Department that was issued to all employees.

Currently, the general procedures on handling bomb threat calls are the only written and issued procedures on emergency situations for the Welfare Department. However, in case of fire a bell signal system is used to indicate which building in the Welfare and Valley Medical Center (VMC) complex originated the call. The system, developed several years ago and recently overhauled by the Public Works Department, uses a series of rings to designate the number of the building affected. The system rings this code throughout the complex, but employees must know their building number signal to recognize the fire danger area. Activation of this system alerts the fire department and the VMC switchboard operator. The switchboard operator also calls the fire department to inform them of the type and building location of the fire.

It is possible to also use this system when it is necessary to evacuate the building because of a bomb threat, because the fire department wants to respond when buildings are ordered to be evacuated under these circumstances.

The acting Safety Coordinator of the Personnel Management Division met with the Welfare Business Manager and Chief Investigator of the Family Support Division on May 11, 1977 to outline basic areas for formulating an emergency procedures plan for the Welfare Administration and old Commissary buildings at the Kings Canyon complex. The basic areas to be developed are: alarm system for evacuation; floor diagrams/evacuation routes; assembly areas; securing facility prior to evacuation; floor coordinators; and general emergency instructions.

According to the acting Safety Coordinator, there are many County occupied facilities not covered by a comprehensive emergency procedure plan. He is currently developing a Model Emergency Procedure Plan (MEPP) that covers fires, earthquakes, bomb threats and explosions. This plan can be adapted by County departments or serve as a guideline for the departments to develop more specific plans to meet unique situations or special needs of their facilities or operations.

The MEPP, nearing completion, can be adapted for the Welfare Department with minor additions, such as (1) designating that the Intake building is not included in the Kings Canyon complex alarm system, and if a fire is reported in this building, workers would have to be notified vocally to evacuate the building; and, (2) if the present alarm system is used in case of bomb threat, the VMC switchboard operator should be alerted to notify the fire department of the nature of the alarm.

Detailed emergency procedures have been developed for six County buildings or complexes. These are the Courthouse, Hall of Records, VMC, Sheriff's Department, and Computer Services.

If the MEPP is approved and adopted for Countywide usage, most of the preliminary work of the Business Manager can be used in adapting the MEPP to the specific needs of the Welfare Department.

On January 20, 1977, a bomb threat call was received by the Welfare complex switchboard operator. The Sheriff's Office and the key personnel were notified. All of the Welfare buildings were evacuated and the Sheriff responded to the call and searched the buildings. According to the Welfare Department Business Manager, there was a delay of approximately 45 minutes after the call was made by the operator before the bomb search crew arrived.

The operator receiving the call was a new employee and date and time of the call was not recorded. According to Sheriff's records, the time the call was received was not listed, but the Sheriff's unit responded at 3:38 p.m.

During the past three years, the Welfare Department switchboard operator states that they have received two other emergency calls:

6-8-76 - A call to report a car on fire in the parking lot.

6-3-74 - A bomb threat call.

CRITERIA

A policy should be clearly established setting forth alternate courses of action in the event of a bomb threat call.

Specific plans should be developed to expeditiously alert staff to a decision to evacuate their building under emergency conditions. Plans should also provide for receiving and reporting calls on emergency situations, proper evacuation exits to use for each work area, designated assembly areas, and prompt return to work area when the "all clear" signal is given.

Employees should be issued instructions and trained on how to respond in an emergency situation.

EFFECT

During the January 20, 1977 bomb threat call alert, the Welfare buildings were evacuated. The Sheriff's Department was properly notified, but the Welfare Department switchboard operator receiving the call failed to follow the instructions for logging in the call.

Since the time that the bomb threat call was received was not recorded, nor the time the Sheriff's Department was notified, we are unable to ascertain the lapse of time before the Sheriff's Department responded to the call. We are also unable to determine how long it took to accomplish the evacuation, whether it was orderly, or whether all employees returned to work after the "all clear" unless it was after their quitting time.

Under the current evacuation procedure of contacting building coordinators, delay is inherent in notifying many personnel of an evacuation order.

The lack of a designated assembly area impedes an orderly return of all employees to the work area after an "all clear" signal is given.

CAUSE

The present written bomb threat procedure is not sufficiently specific to assure a consistent, complete and orderly evacuation of all buildings.

Further planning, training and coordination with emergency services are necessary to prepare the Department for emergency responses.

The alarm system is of questionable effectiveness in alerting employees in the particular building for which the alarm is sounded because they must remember the code of rings designating their building. The present system was designed as a fire alarm system and is tied directly to the fire department for immediate response in a fire emergency. Only recently has it been considered to be used also for a bomb threat emergency. This was brought about because of the pending change in policy that the fire department would prefer to be alerted when buildings are evacuated because of a bomb threat.

RECOMMENDATIONS

107. The Department should coordinate the development of its emergency procedure plan with the County's Safety Officer to avoid duplication of effort, but should make sure that procedures are developed and issued to be used in case of fire, earthquake, bomb threat, and other emergency situations similar to those developed for the Courthouse, Hall of Records, Valley Medical Center, Sheriff's Department and Juvenile Hall.
108. The Department should schedule evacuation alarm drills to reinforce employee understanding of the building designated by the code of rings, evacuation routes, assembly areas, and other emergency responses.
109. The Public Works Department should evaluate the feasibility of redesigning the alarm system to ring only in the buildings affected by an emergency condition, and report its finding to the County Administrative Office for follow-up.

43. DIFFICULTIES IN ADMINISTERING WELFARE

FINDING SUMMARY

Many of the Welfare Department's problems revolve around complexities of programs, frequency of regulation changes, and the multiplicity of government agencies to which it is accountable.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Welfare Department reports to various government agencies. These include the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP) for financial assistance programs administered under the Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW); the State Department of Health for the Medi-Cal program (which is the Medicaid program under DHEW), Homemaker/Chore, Child Welfare, and Social Services to adults; and to SDBP for the Foodstamp program under the Federal Department of Agriculture. The Department also works closely with the State Employment Development Department.

These agencies issue detailed manuals that describe regulations and procedures for determining client eligibility and aid amounts or provision of services. Some of the manuals detail the keeping of required statistical data. Others cover Social Services, Medi-Cal and Eligibility Assistance Standards (EAS) for welfare programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Foodstamps. There are 12 manuals in total that must be kept current and properly followed to ensure maximum State and Federal reimbursements and to withstand State and Federal audit scrutiny. The manuals vary in length from 20 to 600 pages and combined exceed 4400 pages. During a six month period from December 1, 1976 through May 31, 1977, the Department received 134 letters, notices, memoranda, and telegrams instructing the Department to revise manuals affecting over 1150 pages. Because of these changes, manuals throughout the Department must be updated and employees instructed on the new provisions of the regulations. Also, cases sometimes must have budgets and benefits recomputed.

CRITERIA

Changes in regulations mandated by other government agencies should be carried out by the County as directed by these agencies.

EFFECT

Because of these numerous regulation changes, workers are more prone to make errors, morale is lowered, and training efforts are much more difficult. Supervisors have more difficulties monitoring and controlling caseloads.

CAUSE

Legislative changes have resulted in many program and regulation changes. The Adult Aids Program which included aid to the aged, blind and disabled was transferred to the Federal Government in January, 1974. However, it still involves the Welfare Department because of State required supplemental payments and emergency loans. In July, 1976, Medi-Cal standards were adjusted by the State to ensure more uniform standards of service based on revised client eligibility requirements. As a result, numerous cases had to be reviewed.

Several recent court cases such as Trump vs. Butz, 1976; Garcia vs. Swoap, 1976; Cooper vs. Obledo, 1975; and Smock vs. Carleson, 1975, have resulted in regulatory changes and client case revisions. To illustrate, in the Cooper case, the court decided that State regulations reducing grants to individuals residing with adult aid recipients because of shared housing and utility needs was not correct. As a result, numerous AFDC cases had to have budgets and benefits revised by eligibility staff retroactively, in some cases back to October, 1971. In the Smock case, the plaintiff successfully contended that State regulations which make an unmarried father ineligible for AFDC-U (unemployed) when the mother is in the home receiving aid was inconsistent with Federal regulations. This case also resulted in a review of AFDC cases by Welfare staff including recomputing budgets and benefit amounts retroactive as far back as 1971.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendations offered in Section II, Supervisory Effectiveness; and Section X, Departmental Training, are intended to assist the Department to deal more effectively with regulation and program changes.

44. TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR WELFARE RECIPIENTS

FINDING SUMMARY

The Department has developed innovative academic and vocational training programs for welfare recipients.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

In November, 1961, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution authorizing the Welfare Department to conduct a retraining and re-employment project for mothers of dependent children. The pilot training program operated from April, 1962, until January, 1964 with 400 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) mothers participating.

An evaluation completed at the close of this pilot project by the Director of Public Welfare, Reed Clegg, revealed that the biggest hinderance to employment was lack of a formal education. This information, coupled with a survey of the total recipient population of Fresno County, showed:

- 23% of adult recipients had not completed the fourth grade.
- 48% of adult recipients had not completed the eighth grade.
- Only 5.4% had completed high school.

As a result of this information, it was determined that an intensive and accellerated educational program was needed. The Fresno County Welfare Department, in cooperation with the Fresno City Unified School District, established an adult day school--the Reed Clegg School--in the Welfare Department complex.

The goals of the education and training program were to:

1. Provide an intensive and accellerated educational program for welfare recipients who had not completed their elementary or high school requirements.
2. Prepare these recipients for employment in jobs that would provide enough income to make it unnecessary to remain on the welfare rolls.

The Reed Clegg School operated from January, 1964, until December, 1974, when the school was phased out because of Federal legislation (P.L. 93-233, "Talmadge Amendment"). This new legislation required that all of the students participating in the Reed Clegg School make themselves available for academic and vocational training under the Work Incentive Program (WIN) in order to continue receiving aid. The "Talmadge Amendment" was intended to provide training programs in all counties uniformly.

During the period the Reed Clegg School operated, the Employment Development Department jobs program got first chance to recruit eligible recipients before they were enrolled. Therefore, those with the most obvious potential for success were diverted to employment and did not participate in the program.

Other factors discouraged welfare client participation in the program including the financial burden of child care, lack of transportation, and low motivation.

Some of the graduates of the Reed Clegg School and recipients who received scholarship awards have had success in the fields of teaching, correctional work, and in the business world.

A welfare scholarship fund was established for the Reed Clegg School graduates in 1964. The scholarship fund administered by the Welfare Scholarship Committee still exists and awards scholarships to deserving welfare recipients. The first scholarships were awarded in March, 1967, from a small fund of \$400. The original funds were from gifts from clubs and individuals. As of May, 1977, 102 scholarships have been awarded totaling \$8,900.

In 1974, the Welfare Department established the position of Job Training Specialist. General Relief recipients are referred to this specialist for job placement. This jobs program is funded exclusively by the County.

The Job Training Specialist states that finding jobs for recipients is not easy because of the applicant's prior work habits. He has been able to expand the work project to include some jobs in the Health Department and is trying to develop some job openings in the Valley Medical Center.

General Relief recipients are not eligible for participation in the WIN program.

CRITERIA

The Department should provide welfare recipients with an

opportunity for expanding their knowledge and skills to reduce their dependency on welfare assistance.

The Department should utilize all possible job resources available to train General Relief welfare recipients for job placement.

EFFECT

During the 11 years the school operated, combined student enrollment totaled 12,805. Three hundred twenty-four (324) students completed requirements for high school graduation and 124 graduated from the eighth grade. Of the 324 high school graduates, all but two are gainfully employed or remarried and leading successful productive lives according to a follow-up report completed by Reed Clegg on May 12, 1977.

Fresno County was one of the 15 counties that won a 1977 achievement award from the National Association of Counties. The award program, developed to give national attention to innovative programs, was awarded to Fresno County for the program developed by the Welfare Department to provide work training for General Relief recipients.

One of the Works Training Projects established is with the Department of Parks and Recreation in which 40 persons have participated. Approximately 20% of these persons have stayed on the job six months. Of this 20%, nearly all have been placed in other permanent jobs.

CAUSE

The success of the Reed Clegg School program was due to several factors;

1. The Social Workers and Eligibility Workers encouraged and aided the recipients in developing and sustaining a psychological motivation for continuing with the program.
2. The mother-students were provided day care facilities for their children.
3. Transportation was eventually arranged for students who required it, or money was made available for this purpose.
4. Scholarships were awarded to graduates of the high school program so that higher education was available.

5. Job placement was a main goal of the program. There were large numbers of County departments and school districts participating in which jobs with a "good" future were made available to qualified graduates. The graduates were carefully screened for placement and referred to jobs that they could handle and enjoy.

The low rate of success of the present job program may be because available jobs require little skill and advancement is not easily foreseeable. Another reason is that a large portion of General Relief recipients are substance abusers whose average length of participation in the program is three or four weeks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

110. Expand the Job Training Specialist's responsibilities to include seeking and developing more job placement opportunities for General Relief recipients.
111. Re-establish the training contacts with the various public and non-profit agencies of Fresno County that existed during the era of the Reed Clegg School for possible placement of eligible General Relief recipients.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS

We would like to point out that Social Worker staff is stationed at the Employment Development Department offices under the Special Administrative Unit/Work Incentive Program and they assist the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients who are referred to the WIN program in overcoming barriers to training and employment.

There are various manpower agencies throughout the County with whom the Department has and will cooperate in relation to training and job placement for recipients.

SECTION IX - HOMEMAKER/CHORE SERVICES

45. WITHHELD HOMEMAKER/CHORE SERVICES WITHOUT NOTICE OF ACTION

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Until April 18, 1977, the Welfare Department violated State regulation MS 30550.52 by orders of the Director to not send Form 239 to applicants that requested and were denied Homemaker/Chore services. This denied applicants notice of their right to a "fair hearing" before the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP).

FINDING SUMMARY

During a period when the State appropriation was insufficient to cover the cost of adding new clients to the Homemaker/Chore program, clients found eligible for services under the program were notified orally, but not in writing, of their application status. Clients found not eligible for the program were properly notified by Form 239, Notice of Action, which advised them of their right to appeal.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Homemaker/Chore program was established in December, 1973, and is administered in Fresno by the General Services Section of the Social Services Division of the Welfare Department. The General Services Section's staff consists of 34 Social Workers with geographical assignments to cover Fresno County providing the full range of adult services, such as protective services, conservatorship, housing, health needs, placements and homemaker/chore services. There are approximately 2,000 homemaker/chore cases.

The Homemaker/Chore program, called In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), is one of the State-mandated programs and each county is charged with providing specific levels of service to clients who request and are found eligible for these services. Failure to comply with these levels of mandated services for eligible recipients can jeopardize the allocation of Federal and State funds provided to render these services.

The Homemaker/Chore program must be administered according to State regulations and each county receives a State supplemental payment over and above the basic Federal grant for program operation. Monies are distributed to the counties under a State closed-end appropriation. The allocation to each county is based on past experience and the projected rate of increase of new cases for the fiscal year. In the past, the Welfare Department had not requested additional State funds midyear for the program and had operated within its allocation. However, each year, in order not to drop anyone from the program due to financial constraints, it was necessary to reduce the level of service to clients for short periods of time to remain within the County's financial allocation. In 1975-76, only 92% of the allocation for Fresno County was expended indicating the cutback was overly successful.

The Welfare Business Manager assesses monthly the amount of Homemaker/Chore funds encumbered for contract cases and the amount available for new cases. On March 8, 1977, the Business Manager notified the supervisor of the General Services Section that only \$2,000 of unencumbered funds were available for new cases for the month of March.

The Welfare Department administration decided to delay commencement of services to new applicants (except in severe cases) as a means of controlling spending within authorized levels, rather than scale down services to most recipients as in prior years. The IHSS financial allocation for each county is partially based on past usage, so that the delay approach to expenditure control would increase the potential for additional funds in fiscal year 1977-78 as well as 1976-77 by letting SDBP know that the yearly allocation for the program in Fresno was insufficient to meet identified needs for Homemaker/Chore services among eligibles.

A request for additional funds of \$190,000 was submitted to the State Department of Health based upon the anticipated increase in caseload for IHSS for the remainder of the fiscal year.

While awaiting action from the State, new requests for IHSS were being processed by services staff. Following the departmental decision to delay commencement of services, the workers were instructed to adhere to normal notification procedure if service was denied. When the applicant was eligible for services, the applicant was to be informed orally by their Social Worker that money was not available at that time to begin the service, and that the application would be held in abeyance until funds were available. This procedure was in apparent conflict with the Department of Health regulations 30.450.54 and 30.460.54 which state that the individual shall be notified in writing of what services they will receive and when. Applications for services must

be processed within 30 days, and if an application is denied, a client has one full year to appeal the negative action. Eligibles were, therefore, not advised of their right to appeal this delay in receipt of services.

On March 25, the Business Manager notified the Social Services supervisor that because of changes in active case status (deaths, hospitalization and cessation of emergency situations), additional funds were available for new cases which had been held in abeyance since March 8. On April 4, the Business Manager again, after the monthly assessment, notified Social Services staff that no funds were available for any new cases during April.

On approximately April 14 or 15, the Business Manager obtained informal approval by telephone of the earlier request for funds. Social Services staff immediately began processing cases which had been held in abeyance since April 4. On April 22, 1977, the Business Manager notified Social Services staff that he had reprojected the homemaker/chore expenditures with the additional funds to be received and estimated \$20,000 would be available for new cases to be added to the program through June 30, 1977. No further funding shortage was anticipated for the remainder of 1976-77.

The State Department of Health also added additional funds to Fresno's allocation to cover increased costs due to implementation of wage order 15-76 (minimum wage law).

CRITERIA

The State Department of Health regulations of Policy and Procedures Division 30.450.54 for the chore program and 30.460.54 for the homemaker program require that all clients should be notified in writing (Notice of Action Form 239) what services they will receive and when.

EFFECT

One hundred eighty-six (186) eligible applicants did not receive Form No. 239 (Notice of Action) advising them officially of their status and the process to appeal the Welfare Department's decision as provided by State regulation, and had services withheld during the periods of March 8 - March 24, 1977 and April 4 - April 15, 1977.

CAUSE

The decision not to add new cases until funding was available was made administratively.

This entire episode was precipitated by the State's practice of funding the open-ended Homemaker/Chore program under a closed-end appropriation, providing insufficient allocations at the beginning of the year, and providing supplemental funds to counties only after funds run out and services are jeopardized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

112. Conform to State regulations in notifying applicants of the Department's decision on the status of their case.
113. Notify SDBP as early in the year as possible of any projected shortages in the Homemaker/Chore allocation to the County, the projected date that funds will run out, and the extent to which such shortages jeopardize the continuation of program services to clients. The SDBP can then indicate to the County what action should be taken under these conditions.

46. OPERATION OF HOMEMAKER/CHORE PROGRAM

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Grand Jury and former Welfare Director agreed that the Department needs advice on how to operate the Homemaker/Chore program.

FINDING SUMMARY

Homemaker/Chore program regulations have been undergoing revision by the State Department of Health (SDH) since June, 1974. The Board of Supervisors has already been responsive to the Grand Jury observation by establishment of a Homemaker/Chore Advisory Committee which is now active.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Homemaker/Chore program, known as In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), comprises one of 10 mandated State programs that each county must provide as part of public social services.

- Homemaker services are provided for adults who are unable to adequately care for themselves in their own homes because of physical or mental handicap.

This service includes a determination by a Social Worker of the type of homemaker assistance the person needs and the Social Worker makes arrangements for a trained and supervised homemaker.

- Chore services are provided for adults who are unable to perform essential, routine household tasks, basic shopping, simple household repairs, or other related work activities. Services provided allows the person to remain in their own home and continue to maintain an adequate level of self-sufficiency.

These program services are fully subsidized and all funds (Federal participation 75% and State 25%) are dispensed by the SDH. The cost for local administration of the program by the counties is subvented 75% by Federal Title XX Social Services funding with 25% county participation.

The Welfare Department, after evaluating and approving an applicant's request for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), decides in what manner the services can best be provided. The choices are referral to a contract agency or execution of an individual provider contract.

The SDH, as financial controller of program funds, has asserted it has the right of final approval on all provider agency contracts processed by the County for the Homemaker/Chore program. As part of the process, the SDH reviews all invitations for bids, provider agency contracts, and may make recommendations on provisions that should be included in the contract. Provider agency contracts are processed yearly, and in the past, were processed during the last quarter of the fiscal year to become effective at the start of the new fiscal year. Last year (fiscal year 1976-77), the SDH issued some additional complicating instructions that affected the contract process as follows:

Fresno County contracted with Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) to provide homemaker/chore services to approximately 1,000 eligible recipients for 1976-77. Prior to the contract expiration on June 30, 1977, the SDH directed that Fresno County enter into a new contract effective July 1, 1977. The contract was to be awarded on a sealed bid basis to the lowest qualified bidder "unless there were compelling reasons to do otherwise".

Subsequently, the Employee Tax District office of the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP) examined the individual provider contracts with Fresno County and determined that they created an employee-employer relationship. This ruling was taken into account as part of the contract rebidding process.

Invitations to bid were sent to provider agencies, bids received and a contract then awarded by the Board of Supervisors

to the highest, but in the County's opinion, the only responsive bidder. The SDH later notified the County it could not approve the contract based on the fact it was the highest bid. The SDH denial also took issue with two bid addendums dealing with personal attendant care services (county contracts with individual providers) which had not been sent to and approved by them.

Fresno County met with SDH representatives on August 23, 1977 and was given several options on how to resolve the problem. These included submitting the entire program (Homemaker/Chore and the individual provider contracts) to a new invitation to bid, thereby resuming the entire process and requesting the Board of Supervisors seek extension of the EOC contract for the interim; or awarding the Homemaker/Chore portion to the lowest bidder, Remedy Home and Health Care Services, Inc. and submitting personal attendant cases for bid. The Board authorized an extension of the EOC contract and directed the Department to prepare a new invitation to bid. However, another approach for the personal attendant cases was reconsidered. This alternative was direct payment to the recipient who in turn would hire, supervise, and pay his/her attendant. Under this provision, the recipient is the employer. With this method of payment it is anticipated that the County will not be considered the employer as defined in the SDBP employer ruling.

On recommendation of the County Administrative Office and the Welfare Director, the Board selected this latter option -- awarded the contract to Remedy Home and Health Care Services for Homemaker/Chore services and instructed the Department to arrange payment to recipients for personal attendant cases by (individual provider) contract to be effective November 1, 1977 for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The SDH approved this contract effective November 1, 1977. Social Workers will assist recipients in handling of payments, Social Security deductions, etc. Review of cases in September, 1977, indicated approximately 48 recipients would be unable to do this themselves and had no relative who could assist them.

Direct payment to recipients will be made on approximately 480 cases where services are provided by 350 individuals who are under private agreements with the County to provide personal attendant, chore or homemaker services when they need a large number of hours of service. Most of these are cases requiring 24-hour care with some requiring less than 24-hour care, but need a greater number of hours than can be provided under the County's contract with the provider agency. The maximum benefits payable to a client (allocation) are defined in SDH Manual of Policy and Procedures, Division 30-000. When the clients' personal attendant needs require more hours of service than can be provided by EOC and still remain within the SDBP allocation, the individual providers are used because they

are paid at a lower hourly rate (average payment is \$2.25 versus \$3.56 for EOC). These services were also considered in the invitations to bid in the original bidding process for 1977-78 services, but was excluded in the contract to become effective November 1, 1977. The Welfare Department has decided that the method of direct payment to recipients for individual provider service (personal attendant) cases is more economical than contracting with a service firm or providing the services with County employees. More services can be purchased with the available dollars.

Assembly Bill 833 is under consideration that would extend the time limit on contracts to three years. Under a multi-year contract the County would maintain the option of evaluating the performance of the contracting firm, with cancellation rights prior to committing funds each fiscal year. This provision would provide counties with the option of continuing with the same provider agency for up to three years without undergoing the rebidding process.

The Fresno County Homemaker/Chore program Social Workers are also experiencing some procedural problems. These are caused by changing interpretations of Federal regulations received by Fresno County from the State Department of Health.

- March, 1977 - Letters received from SDH appeared to indicate that all chore cases should be converted to minimum wage but should not exceed the maximum amount allowed by SDH for each type of case.
- March, 1977 - As instructed by the SDH, all individual contract cases were reviewed to determine personal attendant cases that were not subject to minimum wage requirements and to adjust the amount allocated for those cases that were subject to minimum wage.
- April, 1977 - Informed by SDH consultants after the State review of cases that protective supervision is a non-allowable expense in IHSS cases. Cases which had already been increased for minimum wage adherence were reviewed to delete protective supervision.
- May, 1977 - Received additional instructions from SDH to review cases to separate personal attendant and chore hours for each case.
- July, 1977 - Received instructions from SDH to review cases that had separate personal attendant and chore hours contracts, because two-part contracts with the same provider were illegal.

Fresno County has attempted in the past to get clarification on some issues prior to implementation. This has helped in some situations, and in others created confusion because of conflicting information. For example, SDH was contacted in March by telephone for clarification of chore and personal attendant contracts and the Department was told that separate contracts for chore services and personal attendant care could be provided by one provider. In July, the Welfare Department received instructions from SDH that two-part contracts with the same provider were illegal.

On August 29, 1977 the Welfare Department received notification from the SDH that fiscal year 1977-78 allocations for the Homemaker/Chore program would be computed using a cost projection method. The cost projection allocation method is based on three components:

- Caseload growth
- Average cost per hour
- Average hours per case

Using this method, program cost is computed for the entire year, and funded on a quarterly basis. The first quarter allocation for Fresno County is \$549,435. If the same amount is to be received each quarter, the total amount allocated for the program in fiscal year 1977-78 is \$2,197,740; this is \$687,486 less than the projected fiscal year 1977-78 cost of \$2,885,226. Efforts are being made by Fresno County to secure increased quarterly allocations from State and Federal funding sources.

CRITERIA

The SDH should have uniform county standards for evaluating Homemaker/Chore cases so that counties can properly administer the program.

Once procedures are clearly defined, the county should be allowed to administer the program without State interference, or without shared program management responsibilities with the State.

Contract negotiations should be started early enough so that the process can be completed by the start of the fiscal year.

The counties should have sufficient authority commensurate with their responsibilities to manage the Homemaker/Chore program.

EFFECT

Closed-end appropriations and annually recurring funding shortages contribute to service disruption to applicants and clients and added administrative costs.

Workers may re-work cases several times to evaluate the services the client will receive, depending on the SDH Auditor's latest interpretation of procedure which is sometimes later revised by SDH program and legal staff in Sacramento.

The Department requested and received a total of 800 hours overtime for staff to complete determination of time/task assignment for all cases. This project was not complete as of September 15, 1977, but 114.6 overtime hours had been used at a total cost of \$745.00 (County share of \$186.00).

CAUSE

The State has retained too much interest in detailed administrative matters and failed to adequately delegate to counties, set standards, and set ground rules for County accountability.

Because of the SDH requirement to bid the contract for the Homemaker/Chore program and ensuing complications, the bidding and award process was not completed until September 27, 1977. This is a time consuming process and will be repeated each year as the time approaches to bid and award contracts. This process could be expedited by awarding multi-year contracts if it were permitted by law.

The yearly, closed-end allocation of funds for the Homemaker/Chore program has been insufficient to maintain the level of service for an open ended program that Fresno County is required to provide by law.

State agencies are in conflict on interpretation of how to assess client needs in determining level of service.

The SDH, when notifying counties of changes in policy, leaves too much interpretation of policy up to the counties without specific guidelines. Upon audit, the State may disagree with the county's interpretation of the procedures, and at that time finally tell the county how the policy should have been interpreted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

114. Fresno County should seek amendments to State law to allow contracts to be awarded for multiple years

to maintain continuity of service by minimizing contract negotiations.

115. The County should aggressively seek standardized written procedures on determining the levels of service, interpretation of regulations and delegation of authority to administer the program for the Homemaker/Chore program from the SDH. The Fresno County Welfare Department is joining other counties in a State study of Homemaker/Chore with the SDH.
116. The County should continue with its efforts to increase the quarterly allocations from State and Federal funding sources to provide continuous services to eligible clients.

SECTION X - DEPARTMENTAL TRAINING

47. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The guidelines for job related training under tuition reimbursement are not defined.

Employees should be able to find out if a class qualifies for tuition reimbursement prior to registering for the class.

FINDING SUMMARY

Fresno County should, on a trial basis, provide a minimum list of courses approved for tuition reimbursement in the more populous classifications. A list of courses would simplify the tuition reimbursement application process and encourage employees to increase their training and thereby improve performance and ability to the benefit of the County and its citizens.

The County needs to clarify its tuition reimbursement objectives as now stated in the Administrative Code and Personnel Rules so that criteria for approval of requests can be properly applied.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Process

Under the current system, County employees interested in taking courses that may be tuition reimbursable are responsible for first reviewing course catalogs from the various schools, colleges and training centers to locate the class in which they are interested. These catalogs contain class schedules and are prepared by the schools and circulated several weeks before registration. Employees desiring to take a class may complete and submit the tuition reimbursement application for approval anytime prior to class registration and up to 21 days afterwards.

Employees of the Welfare Department complete and submit a

tuition reimbursement request to the Welfare Director for department recommendation, and then all copies are supposed to be forwarded to the Personnel Management Division for final approval or denial. Upon receipt by the Personnel Management Division, all requests and their disposition are recorded on a tuition reimbursement log. After the request is approved, the employee must satisfactorily complete the course and provide grade verification at the conclusion of the course to obtain reimbursement of tuition.

Evaluation

The Fresno County criteria for tuition reimbursement is outlined in the Administrative Code, Section 1500, and the Fresno County Personnel Rules. Rule 6, Career Development of the County of Fresno Personnel Rules, states: "Reimbursable courses may be taken to either increase effectiveness in a current job assignment or to advance within the County service" (emphasis added). This appears broader in scope than the Administrative Code provision, Section 1500, which provides that reimbursable courses may be taken if they are directly related to the job in which the applicant is currently employed. The Personnel Management Division and the former Director of Welfare used the criteria more limited in scope found in the Administrative Code (relationship to current job duties) in recommending and approving courses for tuition reimbursement because of budgetary limitations. In a memorandum to an employee, the former Director stated his position as: "It is department and County policy that a course which is eligible for tuition reimbursement must be job related and must be designed to improve the employee's performance and qualifications for the present job assignment".

Eligibility Workers often feel that some courses in the social welfare field could be beneficial in the performance of their duties, but the Department has adopted a policy that most social welfare-social work courses do not promote knowledge of skills required for Eligibility Workers.

Administrative Code Section 1522 as presently drafted requires Department Head recommendation for approval based upon the job related nature of a course to the particular employee. This may be construed to mean the Department Head need submit to the Personnel Management Division only those applications for tuition reimbursement that he recommends be approved. Therefore, it is possible that sometimes all applications were submitted to Personnel Management Division, and other times only those that were recommended for approval.

This may be the reason we were only able to locate eight Welfare Department tuition reimbursement requests in fiscal year 1976-77 during the course of the study. Four of the

eight applications submitted for tuition reimbursement were denied because the courses were not job related. Two of those four applications were processed by the Personnel Management Division, denied because of the course not being job related in addition to being received after the deadline, and returned to the employee. The other applications were rejected by the Department Head and returned to the employee without review the the Personnel Management Division.

The Department does not maintain a central file of tuition reimbursement applications, but the former Welfare Director estimated that between 15 and 20 requests are forwarded to him for recommendation each year, and approximately two-thirds are recommended for approval. This number exceeds the amount we were able to locate in the Personnel Management Division records for 1976-77.

The Personnel Management Division has recently undertaken a review of the tuition reimbursement program and is drafting a proposed change of the County Administrative Code, Section 1500, et. seq. for your Board's consideration. The change includes a provision for County employees to take reimbursable courses to advance within the County service. This change, if approved by the Board of Supervisors, will bring provisions of the Personnel Rules and Administrative Code into alignment. The revision also clarifies the procedure for Department Head endorsement of applications, routing of applications and approving and disapproving applications by the Personnel Management Division.

CRITERIA

The employee should be able to determine course eligibility for tuition reimbursement before registration to have the opportunity to avoid the cost of courses that will not be underwritten by the County.

Fresno County should encourage use of the tuition reimbursement program within the constraints of financial resources for employee development and career advancement where its use supports County objectives in filling positions which are difficult to recruit, in furthering affirmative action or improving job performance.

As part of the Welfare Department's staff development efforts, management should monitor the progress and direction of the tuition reimbursement program and integrate it with its training program.

EFFECT

With the ambiguity in official policy statements, employees interested in taking courses are often not sure at the time that they submit their request for tuition reimbursement if the course will be recommended for approval by the Welfare Director. This sometimes becomes a matter of interpretation and often results in a difference of opinion between the employee and the Welfare Director.

Differences in the County Personnel Rules and Administrative Code provisions do not clearly reflect tuition reimbursement program purposes, and criteria for approval.

Employees have only vague guidelines in the Personnel Rules and Administrative Code to determine which courses meet tuition reimbursement criteria until they submit an application and it is processed. They may not receive word on the disposition of the application until after they have incurred the cost of class registration. This discourages use of the program.

The tuition reimbursement program, as a mutually beneficial resource, is underutilized by Welfare employees and department management to support affirmative action and employee performance goals.

CAUSE

The Welfare Department has not established an internal procedure for processing tuition reimbursement requests below the Director level.

It is difficult to analyze whether tuition reimbursement decisions are based upon appropriate criteria because not all records are available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

117. Assign to specific Welfare Department staff, as a pilot program, the responsibility of compiling a minimum list of job related courses for the more populous classifications in management, social service and eligibility positions.
118. Personnel Management and the Welfare Director should edit this list of courses, and after approval, circulate it prior to each school session so that interested employees will have sufficient time to register and apply for tuition reimbursement for courses which are clearly consistent with County tuition reimbursement objectives. This should not

preclude employees from applying for tuition reimbursement for courses not included on the list which may qualify in their particular situation.

119. Employees should be instructed by the Department in writing to originate all applications for tuition reimbursement through the designated staff person. The staff person should screen the application to ensure that it meets the criteria for tuition reimbursement if not on the approved list, and submit a recommendation to the Department Head. The Department Head should forward all requests to the Personnel Management Division with his recommendation, and Personnel should make the final disposition based on County-wide objectives and resources.
120. The Department should maintain a log of all applications for tuition reimbursement, courses requested and disposition. This log can be used as a reference in evaluating the usage of the program and its contribution to County and department tuition reimbursement objectives.
121. The Personnel Management Division should conclude its review of the apparent inconsistencies between the criteria for approval of tuition reimbursement found in the Personnel Rules and the Administrative Code. County policy and program funding should be re-examined to determine how the program may be organized to mutually benefit the County and its employees.

48. ADMINISTRATION OF STAFF TRAINING

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

Formal education is not adequately job related for many employees. All staff are not receiving adequate training before being assigned and are not receiving sufficient inservice training after being assigned a caseload responsibility. The training that employees do receive is minimal and does not meet State training requirements. Employee training is not properly administered, documented, and is inconsistent within the Department.

FINDING SUMMARY

Educational requirements and job duties are not specifically related. Employees are assigned to units without previous training. Supervisors conduct special training sessions periodically to acquaint staff with major changes in regulations and/or to meet State training requirements. Minor changes in regulations or procedures are discussed in unit meetings by unit supervisors. Sometimes, however, the procedures are interpreted differently by supervisors as instructions are generally received orally to be passed on to the units.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Staff development and training standards for county welfare departments were originally developed and issued by the California State Department of Social Welfare (SDSW). The training standards required each county welfare department to have an approved staff development and inservice training plan and program. The regulations stipulated the time frame for induction training for the positions of Social Worker, Eligibility Worker, and aides. The regulations also covered continuing training, provisions for granting educational leave and the data to be included in the activity report submitted to the SDSW. This procedure was followed until July 1, 1974. At that time, the county welfare departments were requested by the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP, formerly SDSW) to develop and submit their own training plan and periodically submit a report documenting compliance to the training plan, and statistical information on the number of employees trained and hours of training given. As of July 1, 1976, SDBP withdrew its request that statistical data be submitted by counties. However, the information should still be accumulated and submitted to SDBP when requested.

Although Federal funds for training have been drastically reduced, county welfare departments are still expected to meet some training requirements to maintain eligibility for Federal and State funding participation. Therefore, in order to meet these training requirements, the plans developed by the Welfare Department basically covered the training formerly mandated by the SDSW.

In fiscal year 1974-75, the responsibility for direct training of eligibility staff was shifted to the Case Review Unit and line supervisors, but coordinated by the Staff Development Section. A Professional Staff Development Technician worked closely with the Case Review Unit and Eligibility Supervisors in planning, conducting and evaluating eligibility induction and ongoing training.

On March 1, 1976, the Professional Staff Development Technician was reassigned from the Staff Development Section in a building remote from the Eligibility Division and relocated to the Case Review Unit. As the Case Review Unit and Eligibility Supervisors became more involved in the training of the eligibility staff, the focus of the responsibilities of the Technician was shifted from classroom training to ongoing evaluation and updating instructional material. This provided the Eligibility Supervisors with the necessary background material and training plan for each session.

The eligibility determination process for applicants applying for the various welfare programs is the responsibility of the Eligibility Worker. The entry level classification is Eligibility Worker I, but the educational requirements are the same for all of the series and is used more as an aptitude screening device than actual preparation for the job. Once hired, the employees attend an orientation session after being assigned to a unit either in Medi-Cal, Medi-Cal-Foodstamps-General Relief (MFG) or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Ongoing. The training of new employees and documentation of this training is the responsibility of the unit supervisors.

Within the last year, supervisory staff have conducted ongoing classroom training in MFG, AFDC Ongoing Section, Integrated Intake and Valley Medical Center Intake. Special training has been given in foodstamps, budget computation, fraud, child health and family planning, fair hearings, and civil rights. However, the level of classroom training and consistency is formally evaluated only by the workers attending the sessions, but occasionally by administrator monitoring of classes.

Employees attending classroom training sessions evaluated the sessions by checking appropriate boxes in response to specific questions on a training session evaluation form. According to the information on the evaluation sheets, employees were attentive during the sessions, felt a slight need for the training, but expressed a need for more training. Not all employees chose to use the space for comments on the evaluation form; those that did expressed discontent with the sessions. Their main complaints are that sessions are repetitive, boring, unorganized and poorly presented. Employees interviewed expressed a similar point of view, and felt that the most effective training was acquired in a unit with a well-trained supervisor (See Exhibit I).

Training is also given in weekly unit meetings by the unit supervisor. These meetings become the forum for instructing employees on new procedures and regulations. As these instructions are verbal, the interpretation may vary between units. Case Review personnel are responsible for monitoring unit meetings to detect varying interpretations either directly or in reading cases.

CRITERIA

Training plans should be developed for each job assignment and to fulfill the State regulations on training.

Staff should receive training prior to being assigned a complete caseload.

The consistency and adequacy of training should be reviewed to ensure that sessions conform to training plans.

All training given employees should be documented to ensure completion of training for each person in their current job assignment.

EFFECT

The Fresno County Welfare Department is responsible for six financial assistance programs and 14 Title XX services programs (10 mandated and 4 optional). Six hundred twenty (620) employees are responsible for the operation of these programs serving over 60,000 persons. To provide effective and efficient program service requires employees that are thoroughly trained in their respective functions. One hundred fifty eight (158) new employees or 24.4% of the total work force, were hired during the period from June, 1976 through May, 1977. Eighty-four (84) of these new employees were Eligibility Workers. A sampling of the new Eligibility Workers was taken to determine how soon training was received after starting on the job.

1. Orientation training was given on an average within two days to 87% of the new employees.
2. Job related classroom training was given after starting to work to:
 - 40% within a 15 day period
 - 40% within 15 days to six months
 - 10% on the job less than one month (training statistics not available at time of survey)
 - 10% resigned within a month.

It is apparent some employees are assigned to full caseloads without adequate training.

CAUSE

Employees are not hired in groups, so formal training sessions

EXHIBIT ISAMPLING OFCLASSROOM TRAINING SESSION EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES - COMMENTS RECEIVED

FROM 3-15-76 TO 4-27-77

COMMENT	TOTAL	FREQUENCY
"Bad" training session = Boring, unclear, unorganized, not enough examples, poor presentation, too much review and repetition, not long enough for questions.	30	47.61%
"Good" training session = Quick efficient, good use of examples, clear, organized, logical.	17	26.98%
Negative comments concerning the procedure that the employees were being trained to utilize.	4	6.35%
Complaints about too heavy a caseload for Eligibility Workers.	3	4.77%
Suggestion that training be conducted at the unit level instead of in large formal sessions.	2	3.17%
Training sessions should be scheduled after deadlines, not before or during monthly case determination period.	2	3.17%
Smaller training sessions would be more effective.	1	1.59%
If monthly training is a must, then group sessions are best because information will be more consistent.	1	1.59%
Need new training evaluation form.	1	1.59%
Training should be voluntary.	1	1.59%
Need less non-related discussion by members of the group.	1	1.59%
TOTALS	63	100%

are delayed until there are enough employees to form a group.

New employees are assigned to units immediately to take uncovered caseloads.

An employee training plan for each worker, although available, has not been used consistently to ensure that all employees are adequately trained.

Training of Eligibility Supervisors has not been consistently given for them to properly supervise their staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

122. A special training course for all new Eligibility Workers should be developed and established. Training can be Federally subsidized at 75% of salary for those employees assigned exclusively to a training program for not less than for and not more than eight weeks. This type of training could also serve as a new employee screening mechanism for those employees who leave after they are hired because they do not like the job and for those not adaptable to welfare type work. (Similar training programs are used in Orange, Riverside, San Francisco, Sonoma and Santa Clara counties).
123. Assign a unit in each section to serve as a training unit, to acquaint the new employee with the specifics of the job prior to regular unit assignment.
124. Instructions on new procedures and regulations should be written and each employee should receive a copy so that ambiguities or misinterpretations of new instructions are minimized. Each new instruction should be dated and indicate what previous instruction is superseded. Expiration dates may be further utilized to control the use of outdated instructions.
125. Utilize tests to measure progress of staff as part of the training process.

49. SOCIAL SERVICES TRAINING

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

There is a serious lack of professionally trained Social Workers within the Welfare Department. Increased skills are needed to

render effective adoption services, to provide diagnostic and treatment services to families, and to identify and deal with fraud. In the Child Protective Services Section, new employees are put on the job without preparatory training.

FINDING SUMMARY

Until fiscal year 1977-78, very few new personnel have been added to the Social Services staff in recent years. New employees are assigned to units and trained on the job. Social Workers feel they are well trained to do their job, but could use additional training in handling special client behavioral problems.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Fresno County Welfare Department administers public social services for individuals and families who need special assistance in solving personal, family or social problems. These services are provided by the Social Services Division.

The Social Services Division of the Welfare Department has a staff of 109 Social Workers, 15 Social Work Supervisors, and 4 administrative positions. They are responsible for providing 10 State-mandated social services: information and referral services, protective services for children, protective services for adults, out-of-home care services for adults, child day care services, health related services, family planning services, in-home support services, and employment related services. In addition to the mandated programs, four optional services are offered; homemaker services for children, home management and other functional-educational services, money management services, and adoption services. To deliver these services, the Division is organized into sections of one or more units that deliver related type of services: children's protective services, out-of-home placements for children, employment, family and housing services, and general adult services.

All counties receiving funds under Title XX of the Social Security Act are required to develop and submit a Social Services Program Plan each year to remain eligible for participation in Federal and State funding. The Title XX program plan submitted must include program objectives, types of services to be provided, number of eligible people and geographical area to be served, and statistical data of revenue and expenditures anticipated. The Staff Development Supervisor, in conjunction with Welfare administrative staff, is responsible for compiling and submitting the Title XX plan to the State Department of Health. Instructions for case data recording and reporting social services rendered under the Title XX Plan are also devised and sessions for Social

Services staff are conducted for usage of these instructions.

During the past year, the Staff Development Supervisor conducted orientation sessions for the new Social Services staff, participated in their induction training, developed special training sessions, and participated in conducting some of the special sessions. Special training sessions have been given to Social Workers as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Social Workers Attending</u>
6/74	Dependency Petition Investigation	8 (Dependency Petition Investigation Unit)
6/75	Family Diagnosis and Treatment	16
4/76	Child Health Care	85
10/76	Fraud Detection	86
3/77	Civil Rights	85

However, the basic responsibility of on-the-job training was shifted to unit supervisors because of low employee turnover (9% in all classifications from June, 1976 through May, 1977). Because of the low rate of turnover, new employees are assigned directly to a unit and are given immediate caseload responsibility. Training occurs in the unit and during supplemental special training sessions. New employees interviewed expressed satisfaction with the training they had received and the method of training. They would like, however, to attend more symposiums and seminars to keep abreast of new techniques introduced in the field of social work.

During the period from January, 1976 through July, 1977, nine job related seminars and/or conferences were attended by Social Workers:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Social Workers Attending</u>
1/26/76	Uniform Parentage Act	1
2/18/76	Foster Care Management and Effective Court Participation	5
10/22/76	Cultural and Psychological Pressure Re: Adolescent Parenthood	2
11/12/76	Child Abuse Forum	3

11/26/76	Child Abuse Forum	1
2/9/77	Training Session on Adoption	1
2/17/77	Death and Dying	2
2/25/77	Family Support Conference New Trends in Investigation	1
6/9/77	Developing Detached Concern and Preventing Burnout	4

Although only one or two attended most of the sessions, a total of 20 Social Workers attended all nine sessions. Staff attending special seminars and conferences share the information obtained from these sessions with other staff in unit meetings or special training sessions.

Workers have, on occasions, requested and received training to cope with special behavioral problems of clients:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Social Workers Attending</u>
7/28/77	Dealing with Incest and Sexual Abuse	Protective Services Staff
8/11/77	Dealing with Incest and Sexual Abuse	Placement and Adoption Staff

Other staff interviewed felt that they were also well-trained for their particular functions. The two Social Workers assigned to Adoption Services, because of experience, are well-qualified. One has over 10 years of experience in adoptions and the other has been on the job one year, but has previous adoption experience from Los Angeles County.

An induction training program for Social Workers is conducted by the Staff Development Supervisor and Social Services administrative staff. The training program should include training contents such as social services programs, short-term goal oriented intervention, use of referrals, community and agency resources, fraud prevention, workload management and recording techniques.

Ongoing training for Social Workers is conducted by the Child Welfare Supervisor and the WAS II in monthly staff meetings in addition to training given by the unit supervisor in weekly unit meetings. Training that Social Workers receive is not routinely documented; therefore, the adequacy or amount of training each employee has received is difficult to ascertain.

According to Administrative Directive #7, dated April 7, 1977, a new position of Case Review Supervisor will be assigned to the Services Section if reclassification action is approved. This position would function similarly to the established position in Eligibility. With this position, employee training needs are to be better defined and training plans devised to correct them.

CRITERIA

Social Workers should receive training that will prepare them for their job assignment. Social Workers should be allowed to attend conferences and seminars to remain abreast of current treatment techniques.

Each new Social Worker should receive consistent and adequate on-the-job training, working with an actual, limited caseload.

Special training should be conducted to instruct workers on how to deal with difficult client behavioral problems.

All training should be documented to monitor progress toward providing each employee full training for their job assignment.

EFFECT

Employees are assigned to units without prior training.

The level of training employees receive may vary in substance and quality from one unit to another.

The adequacy of training that each Social Worker receives is not evaluated for thoroughness or consistency.

CAUSE

So few employees were hired and at differing times during the year that the primary responsibility for training delivery was shifted from the Staff Development Supervisor to the respective unit supervisors.

A training profile plan for each assignment type, though available for Social Workers in general, has not been used to ensure that all employees are adequately trained.

Some units are more effective in training new employees than others. The existing procedure is that new employees are assigned to the unit with the existing vacancy without going through a specialized training course and may not be assigned to a specific unit that is noted for its consistency

and effectiveness in training new employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

126. A job training profile developed for Social Worker staff should be used consistently for each type of Social Worker assignment to define appropriate employee training.
127. Develop and establish a special eight week training course for all new Social Services staff to elevate the level of consistency of induction training. The Department should seek Department of Health, Education and Welfare approval of such an eight week training program to obtain a Federal subsidy at 75% of the salary of employees assigned to it.
128. One of the regular units should be designated in each of the major social service sections, Children's Protective Services and General Adult Services, to serve as a training unit for new employees that have completed the special training course.

50. FOODSTAMP TRAINING FOR INTAKE STAFF

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The State required training in foodstamps for Eligibility Workers and Eligibility Supervisors has not been provided for Intake staff.

FINDING SUMMARY

A foodstamp training program had already been developed and given to Eligibility Workers and Eligibility Supervisors prior to the 1976 audit by the State Department of Benefit Payments (SDBP). The Department has designed an additional, special foodstamp training program to respond to recommendations of the SDBP Foodstamp Efficiency and Effectiveness Report of September, 1976. Intake, as well as Medi-Cal - Foodstamp - General Relief (MFG) and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Ongoing program staff, were receiving this additional, special training at the time the Grand Jury Health and Welfare Committee prepared its interim report on the Welfare Department.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The SDPB Foodstamp Efficiency and Effectiveness (E&E) Review of Fresno County was detailed in the September, 1976 report from the State, and used as the basis for developing a corrective action plan to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the Fresno County foodstamp program.

Staff from SDPB worked jointly with Welfare Department staff in developing the foodstamp corrective action plan to address each of the problem areas cited in the Foodstamp E&E report. The training plan was implemented simultaneously with its submission to SDBP for approval, because of stringent time constraints, and was subsequently approved by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The SDBP found the Fresno County ongoing foodstamp training program acceptable at the time of its review in that new regulations and problems identified by the Case Review Unit were covered in sessions in which attendance for all Eligibility Workers is required. Weekly unit meetings are also used for this purpose.

The State has not funded foodstamp case review auditing activity in Fresno since the advent of cost containment, and it was discontinued by the Welfare Department on January 1, 1977.

The training developed for the corrective action plan was given to all Eligibility Workers involved in the foodstamp program during the period from September, 1976 through June, 1977. Three series of training sessions were given. The first series consisted of four one-hour sessions held monthly during September, October, November and December, 1976, for the AFDC Ongoing Section. The second series consisted of four one-hour sessions held monthly during October, 1976; and January, March, and April, 1977 for the MFG Section. The third series consisted of three one-hour sessions held monthly during March, April, and June, 1977 for the Intake Section.

In January, 1977, an all county letter (#77-2) was sent to county welfare directors from SDBP outlining a three-phase foodstamp training plan that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foodstamp Program Management Branch, was required to develop and implement. The Welfare Department, already in the midst of a training program initiated by the E&E Report, developed and submitted an augmented foodstamp training program to comply with the all-county letter. Two phases of the training as outlined in the all-county letter have been completed, and the third phase is tentatively scheduled for October, 1977.

The former Welfare Director expressed his concern to SDBP for their continuing demands for additional foodstamp training in a letter on March 21, 1977;

"As the cost containment review shows, we are spending too much worker time in Non-Assistance Foodstamps and barely within tolerance for AFDC; we definitely cannot spend additional time in foodstamp training. The low error rate noted in the last E&E review should indicate that our past training efforts are meeting the need.

"A county welfare department has many responsibilities other than foodstamp training. I wish to again remind you that we are constrained by cost containment, no control over the flow of work, and continual demands by other sections of the Department of Benefit Payments as well as from the Foodstamp Bureau."

CRITERIA

Foodstamp training sessions should be developed and provided for staff involved in the foodstamp program.

Training sessions should be scheduled at regular intervals to explain new regulations and also serve as part of ongoing staff training to minimize frequent types of errors.

Training sessions should stress the subjects that were found deficient in the Foodstamp Efficiency and Effectiveness Report from SDBP.

The content of training sessions should not be dependent on special audits by the SDBP to reveal deficiencies or areas not covered in ongoing foodstamp training.

EFFECT

All staff attended special foodstamp training classes developed to conform to State Department of Benefit Payments Efficiency and Effectiveness Report training requirements. Phase III training as required in the all-county letter (#77-2) is just being completed.

CAUSE

Special training sessions were given in foodstamps and related procedures to conform to training requirements deemed deficient in Fresno County by the State Department of Benefit Payments

in the E&E Report. Training required by the all-county letter (#77-2) covered areas that were not included in the E&E Report nor covered as part of regular unit training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

129. That the Welfare Department attempt to anticipate SDBP and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) training requirements in its ongoing foodstamp training program so that mandated special training efforts to augment local training programming can be minimized.

51. STAFF DEVELOPMENT SUPERVISOR

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Staff Development Supervisor is performing in inordinate amount of clerical duties.

FINDING SUMMARY

The Staff Development Supervisor performs some clerical functions to complete assigned duties.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

On April, 7, 1977, Welfare Department Administrative Directive #47 was issued in which training responsibilities were outlined and codified for the Eligibility and Social Services Divisions. The division of training responsibilities was a continuation of shifting the focus of assignment of the Staff Development Supervisor from training to specialized functions. As his training responsibilities were decreased, so was the staff. The Staff Development unit has been reduced from a staff of four position to one between 1972 and 1977.

- One Professional Staff Development Technician was delted in 1972 as an economy measure.
- One Professional Staff Development Technician was transferred to Case Review in 1976 as part of the reorganization of eligibility training.
- One Clerical Staff Development Technician was transferred in 1976 and reclassified in July, 1977

as a Principal Clerk to supervise the Microfilm Program.

The current responsibilities for the Staff Development Supervisor include:

- Title XX Social Services Program Planning, Development, Coordination: Conducting an annual needs assessment study; conducting an annual resources identification/ allocation study; developing and writing an annual Social Services Program Plan; working with Social Services staff within the Department and from other "Case Data System" counties in developing a computerized Social Services recording and reporting system; compiling statistical data for internal management reports and for the quarterly and yearly State mandated Title XX Social Service Report. (The report includes the number of recipients receiving aid in all categories during the period by sex and aid category.)
- Social Services Staff Training: Writing an annual Staff Development Program (policy) Statement and training plan according to State regulations and internal staff needs; planning, organizing, conducting, coordinating, and evaluating training activities; negotiating with other State, regional and local human services agencies to develop joint or reciprocal training activities; conducting and coordinating orientation/induction training for newly appointed Social Workers; providing individualized career counseling for employees and prospective employees; maintaining liaison with SDOH, SDBP, and other State and local agency training personnel to plan and evaluate training programs, methods, techniques, media, and materials; coordinating the student intern field placement program in liaison with CSUF, Fresno City College, and Reedley College.
- Civil Rights Program Management: Writing an annual Affirmative Action Program Plan according to State Merit System Services guidelines; conducting monthly statistical studies of the ethnic/sex make-up of staff as part of ongoing program monitoring and evaluation; conducting recruiting, career development/ upward mobility/Equal Employment Opportunity counseling activities. The Civil Rights Program Management function includes responsibility for coordinating two sub-programs:

Administrative practices required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to assure non-

discrimination toward applicants and recipients of financial assistance and/or social services programs administered by the Welfare Department.

Administrative practices required under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act assure non-discrimination in employment and personnel practices within the Welfare Department. Investigate complaints of alleged discrimination received from their welfare applicants/recipients or from Welfare Department employees.

--Public Information: Providing information to the general public, in response to inquiries regarding welfare programs and services; collecting and compiling statistical data on information/referral contacts completed by other members of staff; giving speeches and conducting training sessions for community groups and organizations.

These assignments involve writing and compiling information and reports, such as personnel transactions summary data reports (ethnicity, sex and classification summary), and the Title XX statistical report. Therefore, much of the routine clerical work is performed by the Staff Development Supervisor.

Currently, training needs in the Social Services Section are not systematically identified, but are usually requested by staff or required as training for new regulations. However, with the proposed establishment of a Case Review Supervisor for Social Services, the lack of comprehensive training programming should be eliminated.

The majority of training received by Social Services staff is received through on-the-job training in the unit and special classes conducted jointly by the Staff Development Supervisor and Social Services Administrative staff.

CRITERIA

Staff training needs should be identified, responsive training programs designed, and sessions scheduled for appropriate staff.

Training should be directed toward existing procedures identified as inaccurately understood by staff, or to introduce new procedures. Social Services staff request additional training in areas where they are experiencing difficulties. As their requests are received and acted upon, records should be maintained to see if new staff request similar training so that additional training in this area can be included in the basic training plan.

All training that each employee receives should be documented. Each employee's record of training attendance should be periodically reviewed to ensure that they have received appropriate training for their job assignment.

Program training plans should be developed and submitted to the State Department of Benefit Payments to comply with requirements for Federal and State financial participation in administrative costs.

EFFECT

The need for continuing training for Social Services staff has not been consistently identified and given, as there is no systematic way of determining if each worker has been fully trained for the job on which they are assigned.

CAUSE

The assignment of auxiliary functions to the Staff Development Supervisor has eroded his time for developing and conducting training sessions for the Social Services staff. This made it necessary for unit supervisors and line administrators to assume much of the training responsibility with reduced centralized staff guidance or support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

130. Reassign some duties of the Staff Development Supervisor such as Title VII Civil Rights Program management, compiling and submitting the Personnel Transaction Summary Data Report, and Public Information and Student Intern Field Placement Program to a position under which personnel administration staff responsibilities can be consolidated.
131. Reassign the responsibility of coordinating Title VI Civil Rights activities to one of the sections in the Department that is already involved in investigating complaints of welfare recipients.
132. Reassign the statistical functions of the Staff Development Supervisor such as mandated Title XX statistical report and accompanying internal management report duties to other personnel under which statistical functions can be consolidated.
133. Assign the Staff Development Supervisor the responsibility for developing and coordinating a plan to utilize

Federal training funds for improved induction and job training for newly hired Eligibility Workers and Social Workers before they are assigned to work full caseloads.

52. TRAINING ASSISTANT AND PROFESSIONAL

STAFF DEVELOPMENT TECHNICIAN

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The Professional Staff Development Technician was relieved of responsibility for centralized eligibility training for personnel reasons and not in the best interests of department operations.

An Eligibility Worker is working out of classification as a Training Assistant.

FINDING SUMMARY

The focus of training for Welfare Department eligibility employees was shifted from a central training unit to decentralized training. Orientation and induction training of eligibility staff was assigned to the Welfare Administrative Supervisors (WAS) II and III. Ongoing training was assigned to WAS I's and eligibility supervisory staff. Eligibility training programming is the responsibility of the Case Review Supervisor.

The Eligibility Worker assigned as the Training Assistant (working title) may be working out of classification for the series.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

On February 19, 1976, the Welfare Director issued a memorandum stating that effective March 1, 1976, the Professional Staff Development Technician was to be relocated to the area of the Case Review Unit, although still under the administration of the Staff Development Supervisor. The purpose of relocating the Professional Staff Development Technician to Case Review was to help the Technician identify training needs by observing the types and frequency of errors and from which area in the Department they originate.

The primary training technique was to have the Technician work with individual Eligibility Workers on the job. The training responsibilities assigned to the Professional Staff Development Technician were:

- Caseload management for new Eligibility Workers on an individual basis after the employee had completed three months of service.
- Assist selected Eligibility Supervisors on an individual basis with developing supervisory methods and techniques to produce effective unit performance. (Selected supervisors were those whose unit's error rates were high).
- Assist with or conduct group training provided to implement new procedures, court decisions, laws and regulations.

On August 19, 1976, the Welfare Director addressed a memorandum to all staff which stated:

"Since March of 1976, the Professional Staff Development Technician has been attached to the Case Review Unit on an experimental basis. This has been of practical value to Eligibility Workers and Supervisors and has increased the effectiveness of training. Accordingly, the transfer and attachment to the Case Review Unit is now made on a permanent basis with supervision transferring from the Staff Development Supervisor to the Case Review Supervisor."

In addition to the training responsibilities, the Professional Staff Development Technician was assigned the following specific tasks:

- Preparation of the Annual Staff Development Program Statement (Training plan for income maintenance staff) according to guidelines and instructions provided by the State Department of Benefit Payments.
- Conducting periodic assessments of training needs of income maintenance.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training.
- Compilation of monthly statistical reports required by SDBP and for other documentation of training activities required for SDBP compliance reviews.
- Completing staff training activities as required by SDBP regulations.

--Transitional training for income maintenance staff transferred to new functional assignments.

--Individual career counseling, to assist individual employees to develop optimal capability in performance of current job assignments and as preparation for career advancement.

On January 26, 1977, the Case Review Supervisor altered the assignment of the Professional Staff Development Technician to:

--Transfer the responsibility of conducting classroom training sessions to supervisory staff or administrative supervisors so the Technician could devote more time to on-the-job training of Eligibility Workers.

--Assume a greater responsibility for ongoing evaluation and updating of instructional material. This included:

Reviewing all existing instructional material for needed change.

Reviewing all new regulations and policy on an ongoing basis and updating instructional material accordingly.

Reviewing all instructional material for adequacy in view of current error experience.

On April 7, 1977, Administrative Directive #47 was issued in which the newly developed distribution of responsibilities for training were codified:

Services - Overall training responsibility was assigned to the Staff Development Supervisor. This included orientation, induction and services training of Social Services staff. However, most of this training responsibility has been delegated to Social Services administrative and supervising staff. (Training in this area is covered in finding number 49, Social Services Training).

Eligibility - Training programming was assigned to Case Review, with the Welfare Administrative Supervisors II and III in Ongoing and Integrated Intake responsible for delivering orientation and induction training. Ongoing training was assigned to WAS I's and Eligibility Supervisors. (Eligibility training covered in finding number 48, Administration of Training).

The current structure for training of Welfare Department employees still follows this basic outline.

An Eligibility Worker II was assigned to the newly created assignment of Training Assistant (working title) in the Case Review Unit on April 25, 1977 shortly after the resignation of the Professional Staff Development Technician. The responsibilities of this new assignment are:

- Maintain training statistics submitted from each unit; i.e., training subject, dates of sessions and employees attending. An individual control card is maintained to document the training history of each employee.
- Check all Case Review written results of findings from each reviewer and the statistical report summarizing errors to determine kinds of errors, where they are being made, and where training is required as an aid in developing training material.
- Compile data and document training needs for presentation to the Eligibility Advisory Training Committee.
- Assist the Eligibility Supervisors in preparing training materials for sessions as determined by the Eligibility Advisory Training Committee. The committee determines what training is going to be provided and the material that will be required for the sessions.
- Update the Eligibility Section of "Procedural Guide" (general work instructional manual for the Welfare Department) to reflect material covered in training sessions and new regulations.

Neither classification specifications of Eligibility Worker II or III cover this type of assignment with the exception of the statement, "performs related work as required". This assignment is primarily a clerical function of collection, assembling and recording training data and could possibly fall within the purview of the Eligibility Worker responsibilities because of the informational background necessary in preparing training materials as determined by the Eligibility Advisory Training Committee. The new Training Assistant has not fully implemented all of the assigned duties. Those in the preliminary state of operation are reviewing Case Review results from each reviewer; and reviewing the statistical reports summarizing the types of errors being made by Eligibility Workers and their respective units.

The decentralized method of training is considered more effective by Department management because WAS I's and first line supervisors have constant contact with workers. They interpret and explain program regulations to workers, and by reviewing the unit employees' work product daily, can see if workers are still having problems and in what areas additional training is needed. They also should have a good working knowledge of the regulations and be able to recognize the underlying reasons why a worker may be having problems understanding particular procedures, and adjust training accordingly to make it more effective. However, first line supervisors were assigned this responsibility of training new and regular staff without previous or recent instructions on the techniques of training.

Centralized training programming by Case Review and the Training Advisory Committee, needed to guide supervisors and promote uniformity and accuracy, has not yet been developed very far beyond mandated Foodstamp training.

CRITERIA

The responsibility for all phases of employee training should be clearly defined and distributed in a manner that can be reasonably accomplished with assigned staff.

Staff should be aware of who is responsible for each aspect of training so that they can give input on their own needs.

Training should be geared to improve the employee's job performance by promoting accuracy and productivity.

Staff responsible for training delivery should be given training in effective techniques. Centralized training programming staff should attempt to remain close to case management practices to ensure programming is meaningful.

EFFECT

Decentralizing of responsibility for training delivery to first line supervisors is more realistic than expecting the Technician to both plan and deliver eligibility training for AFDC, Foodstamps and Medi-Cal. Most workers we spoke with agreed that the most effective training is case oriented or geared to common errors, so that unit level training or training for groups conducted by first line supervisors should be more helpful to workers.

This change is meeting with mixed success due to the varying ability of Eligibility Supervisors to conduct training, the change in Case Review personnel assigned to do training coordination, and the recent preoccupation with mandatory training programs.

Eligibility Workers have not yet received the full benefit of training based on error detection by the Case Review Unit.

CAUSE

The Professional Staff Development Technician had several years of experience in classroom and person-to-person training techniques. However, training developed within this framework was not sufficiently directed toward application of specific interpretation of regulations to help Eligibility Workers work cases. Assignment of training need identification responsibility to the Case Review Unit should permit training to be programmed more responsively to identified Eligibility Worker needs. However, Case Review has only recently reactivated training programming and supervisors have not all been given training in how to conduct training sessions.

The new Training Assistant assignment in Case Review, having been operating less than six months, has only recently included reviewing eligibility errors and statistically summarizing them. Not enough time has elapsed to identify all training deficiencies and prepare training materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

134. Supervisory personnel, since they are responsible for employee training, should receive training on conducting training sessions.
135. Case Review should develop its role as a source of training need identification for all aid programs.
136. The Department should continue with full implementation of duties currently assigned to the Training Assistant to improve eligibility training.
137. The indefinite assignment of an Eligibility Worker II to several training activities rather than case work should be examined to ensure it is kept consistent with the County's classification plan, approved organization and adopted budget.

53. FORMAL EDUCATION OF TOP ADMINISTRATORS

GRAND JURY OBSERVATION

The formal education of top administrators of the Department does not equip them for their work in dealing with people.

FINDING SUMMARY

The majority of the top Welfare administrators have taken additional courses in personnel management. However, efforts at improvement of skills in personnel management should continue.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Fresno County classification specifications were reviewed for educational requirements to qualify for Assistant Welfare Director, Welfare Administrative Supervisor III, Staff Development Supervisor, Child Welfare Supervisor, Welfare Administrative Supervisor II, Welfare Administrative Supervisor I, and Case Review and Appeals Supervisor; a total of 19 positions.

The classification specifications for all of the above positions, except Staff Development Supervisor, require "graduation from an accredited four year college or university (additional qualifying experience may be substituted for required education on a year for year basis):

Comparing the class specification requirements and the educational preparation of personnel in these positions shows that all staff in assigned positions meet the educational/experience qualifications. Only one administrative position, Staff Development Supervisor, requires a Master's Degree in Social Welfare, and the person in that position meets the educational qualifications. Thirty-one percent (31%) of employees in administrative positions received their college degrees in sociology, social welfare, or psychology.

Five employees in the management series have graduate degrees and two others have taken graduate courses. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the administrative staff have taken additional courses or a combination of courses in supervision, management, or personnel practices within the last 24 months.

One thousand dollars (\$1,000) is allocated in the Welfare Department budget for educational expense, and during fiscal year 1976-77, none of these funds were expended. However, approximately \$300 from the travel budget was used for special courses and seminars.

CRITERIA

Administrators of the Welfare Department should continue expanding their personnel management skills by taking courses and seminars in personnel management.

The County should encourage and support this continuing training as part of a management development program.

EFFECT

Not all administrative staff have participated in management, personnel or supervision refresher courses.

As indicated in finding #3 on First Line Supervisory and Middle Management Effectiveness, continuing management training is needed to strengthen personnel in these positions.

CAUSE

The Welfare Department has not consciously applied its available resources to support a management development program to increase the skills and improve the practices of its managerial personnel.

RECOMMENDATION

138. Administrative staff should attend refresher training courses in management and personnel practices from time to time to sharpen management skills and keep abreast of new trends in management techniques.

DEPARTMENT COMMENT

A management training program is being developed in cooperation with the Personnel Management Division Training Specialist. The Department will be scheduling management workshops for all administrative staff to assist in initiating management training.

GLOSSARY

AFDC - Aid to Families with Dependent Children

AFDC-FG - Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Family Group

DHEW - Department of Health, Education and Welfare

EAS - Eligibility Assistance Standards

EDD - State Employment Development Department

EOC - Economic Opportunities Commission

FSD - Family Support Division of the District Attorney's Office

FS - Foodstamps

GR - General Relief

IHSS - In-Home Supportive Services

IRIS - Integrated Review and Improvement Study

Medi-Cal - Medicaid Program under Department of Health, Education
and Welfare

MFG - Medi-Cal, Foodstamps, General Relief

NAFS - Non-Assistance Foodstamps

SDBP - State Department of Benefit Payments

SDH or DOH - State Department of Health

SIU - Special Investigative Unit of the Family Support Division

WRO - Welfare Relations Officer

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